

Hello and welcome to episode 26 of
question and answer. I am your host
Punnadhammo Bhikkhu.

And I took the day off from work today
in order to take the driving test and
miraculously I passed it
and I've got a driver's license now,
which is nice.

And I'm all rested up and just to make
sure I'm drinking Red Bull, so I should
be uh

on the ball enough to answer these
questions and there are quite a few.

So, without any further ado, I think I'm
going to start answering questions.

And so the first one is from Chakra

Gosha.

And Chakra Gosha asks, "What is your name? When a monk disrobes, is it customary, optional, or disallowed for him to retain his ordination name versus returning to the secular name that he had prior to ordination? Given your druthers, how do you prefer to be addressed by the people you know online? It seems that for now you are okay with being known as Punnadhammo, but I am curious about whether you plan to eventually switch back to using your secular name."

Well, I'll tell you.

Uh in the Buddha's time,

uh a person wasn't given a new name.

You know, like Sariputta was Sariputta
before he was ordained. Mogallana was
Mogallana before he was ordained.

Mahakassapa was Kassapa.

And um

so I mean it was just supposed to be
your regular name.

And um

I guess because the Pali ordination is
in

um the the Theravadan ordination

ceremony is in Pali, you have to have a
name that uh you know, can be declined
with Pali declensions and so forth.

So, you're it's the the practice to give
you a Pali name, but that's not the way

it originally was. There's no real rules about

um anything after you disrobe. I mean, the rules of monastic discipline just uh cease to apply once you're disrobed. So, you can call yourself anything you like.

Although, if you like for example, I can call myself Pannobhasa or Panno,

but I shouldn't call myself Pannobhasa bhikkhu because I'm not a bhikkhu

anymore. And that could be get you into trouble, you know, you'd be

in a in a sense being a you know,

passing yourself off as a monk without

being one, which would disqualify you

from ever ordaining again, ever from

being a real monk.

So, there is that. It is uh
kind of strange in Burma where
some people already have Pali names.

Like I knew this this guy
this nice man. His name was U Thihan.

And Thihan is the Burmese pronunciation
of Siha, which is Pali for lion. And
also in Burma,

the name you get, especially your
monastic name,

um

it's depends to some degree on what day
of the day of the week you were born on.

So, when I was ordained, um the Burmese
monks asked me what day of the week I
was born on. And I didn't know because I

wasn't Burmese. And so, they had to look it up in a book and it was Thursday. And so, if you're born on Thursday, your name starts with P, B, or M.

And so, I started with P. And sometimes in Burma, they uh somebody asks you your monk's name and I'd say, you know, Pannobhasa and they say, "Ah, you were born on Thursday."

Um anyway, this U Thihan, his name was already Pali. It started with the right letter and still they gave him a different name when he ordained that also started with the same letter.

So, it is kind of strange, but it's uh later stuff that really um has no representation in uh the Pali text like

the rules of monastic discipline.

So,

he can retain his ordination name.

He can do whatever he pleases if he uh
if he disrobes.

Um but again, he should not try to pass
himself off as still being a monk if
he's not one.

Uh this next part of the question here,
given your druthers, how would you
prefer to be addressed by the people you
know online? Um

really, it's just names. I don't really
identify with names. Um I've been called
Panya for more than half my life.

I've been called Panya more than uh

my other names of John or David,

Mr. Reynolds.

So,

um

especially over the past 30 years.

So, it really doesn't matter to me. I

mean, I can go by uh

any any of the above,

and I really don't have uh any

preferences.

So,

I guess I answered that, so I'll just

move on to the next question.

And the next question is from Rob, alias

Dumber Farmer.

And Rob says, is there any scriptural

evidence that the Buddha viewed human

traits in similar Vedic terms, such as the three gunas of rajas, tamas, and sattvic?

If not, what is the closest example to a crossover?

Well, I would say that as far as I understand, I'm no authority on this, but I'm pretty sure that the three gunas of sattva, uh rajas, and tamas, um

they're not really Vedic. They they come from Samkhya.

I'm pretty sure

they come from a

like a non-Vedic tradition called

Samkhya,

which um

was gradually incorporated into

Hinduism,

and um as yoga. It's called yoga. So,

what is what is called yoga is a kind of

uh

theistic Samkhya that uh accepts the

authority of the Vedas. It sort of got

incorporated into so-called Hinduism.

And um it was done before the Bhagavad

Gita was uh

composed because the Bhagavad Gita does

talk a lot about the three gunas.

Um

but I'm not aware of Buddhism talking

about uh a human being composed of the

three gunas. There could be some obscure reference in some sutra that uh I am forgetting.

But um

yeah, I don't think so. So, that goes to the last part of the question here. If not, what is the closest example to such a crossover?

Well, of course, you've got nama-rupa.

You know, just dividing a human being up into mind and matter.

Um

that's fairly straightforward. I mean, nama-rupa is mentioned in uh the Upanishads anyway.

Um you know, under in a slightly

different meaning though.

Um

another crossover,

kind of an interesting one,

which isn't uh

like really primordial to Buddhism, is

um

Buddhist Abhidharma tries to divide

everything up into its component

elements.

And there were movements in Hinduism or

or whatever you want to call it,

Sanatana Dharma,

um that were trying to do the same

thing. Like there's the I think it's

called the Nyaya school, and then

there's another one I think uh it starts

with a V.

Um

that were trying to do the same thing.

It was sort of like Hindu Abhidharma,
where they also are trying to divide the
entire samsaric universe into its
component elemental parts, and then
describing the different um relations
between the parts that then creates this
universe.

Um so, that might be an example of a
crossover, but uh aside from that, I
really can't say

because um

yeah, I'm I'm not really uh

familiar with um anything like the three

guna theory

being uh emphasized in the poly text.

So, I'll just move on to uh

Dharma Farmer

his uh his next question here.

After listening to you mention a few

times that with all the lay life

distractions and difficulties, uh

sitting for meditation,

um

you promote the mindful approach to

various day-to-day mundane tasks. I

don't feel like I've fully grasped this,

or I should say I tried, but the general

boredom of washing dishes, feeding kids,

or driving to work kicks in. Can you

elaborate on this or recommend a good

source to learn more? Well, I mean, he
says uh that the general boredom of
washing dishes
or driving

kicked in, but I mean, if you're sitting
in meditation, you're just sitting there
experiencing your breath going in and
out.

And um that can be pretty boring. I
mean, just watching
the sensation of touch as the of the air
at your nostrils can be pretty boring,
too. So, it's just a matter of
disciplining yourself, training yourself
to do it, I guess.

Um

So, let's see what

I suppose just uh just a general

description of of mindfulness

is I mean, you're not thinking about

something else when you're doing

something. That would be just uh

elementary mindfulness. You know,

whatever you're doing, your your

attention is focused on that. You know,

when you're driving, you're focused on

driving and not uh you know, what you're

going to have for lunch or whatever.

And um at a slightly deeper level,

you're not really interpreting

what you're experiencing.

You know, so in a way, you know, you get

deeper, you're not even really thinking

about what you're doing, you're just attending to it. You're just paying attention to that. And um sometimes, I mean, you have to think.

You know, you you you you have to do problem solving, which requires thinking.

And um that's that's more advanced level when you're actually being mindful of your own thought processes. It is possible, but it is more advanced and more difficult.

So, like just taking the example of washing dishes,

um just the mindfulness of it is, you know, you're there in the present

moment. You know, your mind isn't wandering to other things, not into the past, not into the future, not into what's going on in the next room or the next house or whatever. You're just right there washing the dishes, feeling the water on your hands, feeling the the plate as you pick it up, the hardness, the warmth of it, maybe coolness, whatever it is. You know, the motions of your arm as you're as you're washing the dish, assuming that you're not using a dishwasher.

Um just the sensations, you know, the feelings of of what's going on right there, right now, in the present moment.

And um with as little mental commentary as possible.

And you want a good source to learn more. I mean, the primary source would be the Satipatthana or Maha Maha Satipatthana Sutta

in um

Majjhima Nikaya or or Digha Nikaya, depending on whether it's a Maha or not.

Um a lot of a lot of uh books on mindfulness.

Um

So,

I guess that would be a good short explanation. I hope I explained it without um becoming even more confusing

to

uh Rob here.

So, I'll just uh move on to his next question.

Please tell us how your sheet metal day job is going. Have you had to attend mandatory diversity and inclusion training yet? Smiley face. Have there been any situations that your 30-year monkhood have helped or has anyone shown any curiosity in your past?

Okay, well, the sheet metal day job is going well.

I I

rather enjoy it. I mean, you have rough days, but still it's um it's a good job. I like it.

And with regard to the mandatory diversity and inclusion training, no, this is South Carolina and uh I guess sheet metal shops are they tend to be conservative.

You know, the guys all have beards and and uh a lot of them go to church and yeah, it's it's kind of a redneck kind of a place.

And there is an HR lady, but she's in Tennessee somewhere.

And uh I'm not exactly what sure of what she does. I mean,

I I I don't I don't know what she does.

So, there's

really the the closest thing we've got

to any kind of code of politically
correct behavior is that the owner of
the entire
business

is um

he's like an evangelical Christian. So,
like no cussing is allowed, that kind of
a thing.

So, it it's sort of like a a very
conservative Christian political
correctness, if there is any political
correctness at all there.

Um

let's see. Have there been any
situations that your 30-year monkhood
have helped Um yeah, I mean, just it is
kind of an austere job. I mean, it's

I have to get up early in the morning to go to work, which is like an ascetic practice for me.

And um you know, there's a lot of physical labor involved.

And um

so, it's it's kind of a certain amount of austerity

is involved in the job that uh

you know, I can I can accept it with

equanimity when a lot of people would

just uh you know, just find it uh

too much too much to take

or some such.

Um

So yeah, I think mainly just uh
austerity and equanimity have really uh
helped with the helped with the job. Not
that it's really crappy job, but it it
can be uh a tough one, you know, it's uh
you know, it requires some uh definite

um

um

like physical

like strenuous activity sometimes and
also a certain amount of uh just
bravery, I think like especially when
you're

um just getting used to driving a
forklift and you're having to lift, you
know, 2,000-lb loads and and load them
onto trucks and this kind of thing. It

can be a little bit scary.

Um

So

yeah, I mean it has helped. I mean just

uh

being able just training yourself to
accept any situation with a modicum of
equanimity.

Um

within reason.

That has helped a lot. I mean it can
help with anything in life, not just
working in a sheet metal shop, just uh
driving a car or you know, interacting
with other humans.

Um you know, just not getting lost in

the emotions of it as easily as the average person.

Um

and just being relatively indifferent to being in a comfort zone or just being physically comfortable. Um yeah, the the monk training has definitely helped with that.

And finally, the last part of this question is has anyone shown any curiosity in your past? Well, there is two guys at work that watch my YouTube videos now. I remember one of them he uh I mean before I even showed up at work the boss was going around telling him that he that he had hired a monk. And uh he's kind of a kind of a a

comedian, so nobody was really sure if he was serious or not.

And um

finally one guy was asking me what I did before I started working there. I told him I was a monk living in Asia and he's he said something like, "That's some crazy ass shit." But I mean it wasn't derogatory. I mean he was impressed.

So, he's one of the guys that watches my videos now.

So, hey Austin, how's it going?

And uh yeah.

So, there are some guys that uh they think it's kind of cool that I was a

monk. Taylor, there's a guy named Taylor at work, too, who's a he watches these videos, too. Hey Taylor, how's it going?

So, uh

I guess I answered that one.

So, let's move on to Doma Farmer's next question.

Can someone spiritually grow under extreme stress or fear of death? Years ago I was a young soldier and whilst deployed in the Middle East, I had endless amounts of rockets and mortars landing in a sporadic and unknown lottery-style manner and in the end stopped panicking about them because I couldn't do anything or control the

outcome. Same went for vehicle patrols. You would never know when your vehicle was about to drive over a pressure plate IED and it was death again. Thankfully, I haven't suffered any psychological damage or derangement that happens sometimes in military people. However, over the years I've noted that my fear of death is substantially less than my family members and friends.

So, would this subs-

so would this mental state be attributed to a condition of an enduring threats to my life or could this be something else?

Uh I.E. a minor spiritual breakthrough at the time. What are your thoughts on

this or similar stories may have heard.

Well, clearly, um

coming close to death,

um

I think it may cause more spiritual
awakening in the West than sitting in
meditation.

Um there are some relatively famous
cases.

Um what's his name?

Oh, he was a scientist, an atheist
atheistic scientist, John

Ren Lewis. I think I said John Ren
Lewis.

And he was in Thailand with his wife,
and uh he was riding a bus through
Thailand, and somebody offered him some

candy, and the candy was poisoned cuz they were going to rob them after they lost consciousness.

And uh the wife didn't eat her candy.

The John Ren Lewis ate his, and then when the the thief saw that one of them hadn't eaten the candy, he panicked and got off the bus before anything uh anything bad happened.

But anyway, John Ren Lewis, he had a near-death experience. I mean, he was he was almost dead, or maybe he was dead for a short time.

And um

he had a a near-death experience, which it caused like an awakening experience

in him.

And uh once you have a near-death experience like that, some people, you know, it can be through motorcycle crash or almost drowning or whatever, they tend to lose their fear of death.

And I'm also reminded of a a good movie that actually um I heard about it because cuz John Ren Lewis recommended it in some article that he wrote.

It's called Fearless.

About this guy

who he survives a plane crash.

He's one of the few survivors, and he's like without a scratch. You know, people around him are all dead, but before the plane crashes,

um he just he assumes he's going to die.
So, he just makes his peace, you know,
it's like he just sort of offers himself
up to God or the universe or something,
you know, he just
prepares

or something, you know, the prep- the
preparedness is just forced upon him,
maybe.

And then uh

he survives, but he still has this
fearlessness, this this sort of calm
equanimity. And what goes with it is uh
just honesty that is just so much that
the people around him just can't stand
it. Like, for example, his one of his

best friends was on the plane, too, and he died. And so now the wife has hired a lawyer and they're suing the the airlines

um you know, to get, you know, millions of dollars or whatever because of the the trauma and so forth. And so the lawyer is trying to coach this guy to you know, talk about how terrified he was, you know, because then you get more money,

you know, due to the on the mental stress and so forth. And uh I mean, he doesn't want to say because he wasn't terrified, you know, he's just he just made his peace with it and he was ready to die.

Um

and then gradually just the the
corruption of the human race around him
starts to dragging him back down again.
But the movie's called Fearless. You may
be interested in seeing it. I wouldn't
mind seeing it again myself.

Um

so yeah, I think a lot of men
in earlier ages, not so long ago even,
um you know, they had their baptism by
fire and you know, that was sort of like
their their right of passage into
genuine manhood.

Um

so yeah, it does happen.

Just uh facing death

and just kind of making your peace with

it

is um

yeah, I mean, it's it's a powerful

experience and uh at the end it it could

be attributed to a condition of enduring

threats or

also at the same time it can be

something else like a a minor spiritual

breakthrough.

And for some people it can be a major

spiritual breakthrough.

So, I hope I answered that question more

or less.

And so, I will move on to the next

question, which is from Jeremy.

And in the previous Q&A, I think it was,
I held up a book written by a Bhikkhu
Ñāṇananda.

And Jeremy here asked, "What do you think of Ñāṇananda and his works?"

And to tell you the truth, the only the
only thing I've written The only thing
that I've read by Ñāṇananda was that one
book, which is Concept and Reality, I
think.

Gosh, I'll have to get up and look again
just a second.

See here.

Yeah.

Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist
Thought, which is an excellent book.

And so, I mean, all I know about

Ñāṇananda, I don't know what ethnicity was. Maybe he was Sinhalese.

Um because he lived in Sri Lanka.

And this is the only book that I've read by him. So, I mean, my opinion of his writing and of him would be based entirely on this one book. And it is an important book. It's well worth reading by any um intelligent Theravāda Buddhist or student of Theravāda Buddhism because it is groundbreaking scholarship of a good sort. You know, the entire book is mainly about the meaning of one word, which is papañca, which was misinterpreted by the commentarial tradition for centuries and

centuries. And um he puts forth such a strong case

in this book that uh pretty much everybody is now inclined to uh accept his interpretation of what the word means.

So, I mean, he's important. And he's a relatively good writer. He's obviously intelligent and learned it.

But uh other than that I really can't say cuz this is the only book by him I've ever read.

And I don't I'm unfamiliar with his biography.

So, I'll just have to move on to the next question.

And this is from Inmanus.

And Inmanus says, "Have you ever given Dharma talks to young children? If yes, how do you prepare your talk for a young audience? How do they tend to receive the talk?"

Well, I mean the youngest kids I've given Dharma talks to um like a real Dharma talk would be maybe middle school, you know, maybe 13 years old, 12 or 13.

Um in Burma I've given the precepts to you know, like really small kids.

But uh for them it's it's kind of a ritual. It's not really you're not conveying information so much as you're just participating in this social ritual

that they've learned from their parents
and so forth.

Um

So, how do you prepare your talk for
young audience? Well, if you're going to
be teaching Dharma to kids,
um you're best uh
staying with something relatively easily
imagined, you know, like telling
stories, telling stories from the
Dhammapada commentary for example.

Um kids can follow along with that.

Um

The I mean you want to stay away from
the really abstract stuff. Abstract
philosophy doesn't work very well with

with small children or even really with most high school kids.

So, aside from uh

keeping your your talks um you know, at the level of

you know, illustrative stories

or talking about something concrete.

Like I gave one Dharma talk to kids just talking about the main mudras in Buddha statues. Where you're talking about how, you know, that each of the four main mudras is representative of a different stage in the Buddha's life.

You know, just giving a talk about the Buddha's life, you know, that's that's pretty standard.

Um

with regard to meditation, I mean

in the west, it's like making kids sit still is a kind of punishment.

So, if you're going to give any kind of meditation

instructions to kids, it'll probably be some guided meditation where they're

imagining, you know, getting bigger and bigger and including, you know, the

whole room inside of them and the whole house and the whole, you know, until

they're, you know, their heads up in the sky and they contain all all the people

inside their bodies. That kind of a

thing, I mean

um

if you could get some dhamma into that,
that might help.

Um but other than that, I think I mean,
if you're if the young children are your
own

then just uh setting a good example
and instilling um

what is it? Religiosity. That's that's
like one thing that children pick up
from their parents
is religiosity.

And so, I mean, not in a bad sense, but
um you know, if you sincerely take
something seriously, your kids will try
to imitate you um if, you know, they
don't pick up on any kind of uh fakery.
You know, if you're saying if you're

telling them to do something like, you know, telling them not to tell lies and then they they see you telling lies all the time, then obviously, they're not going to take you very seriously.

But um

if you are just setting a good example then uh kids that spend a lot of time with you will pick up on that.

Um

And how do they tend to receive the talk? Well, as you might expect, a lot of kids they'll just be uh you know, they'll they'll they'll their attention will be distracted and they'll be

just kind of looking around, kicking
their legs, or, you know, whatever.

Um

it's

I've always had the idea it's best to
teach people that want to be taught.

And if kids are sent to a monk to learn
something, and they're just sitting
there because their parents want them to
be sitting there, they're not going to
learn anything. They're going to what
they learn will be just minimal.

And that happens with adults, too. I
mean, if someone is just assigned to
come and learn something from you, you
know, it's like the abbot sends some
young monk to come learn monastic

discipline from me, which happened a few times. And um

you know, if they're sincerely interested, they really want to learn, then they'll learn something. But if they're just there because they're they're told to be there and they don't really care, then

it's uh it's not going to work very well. And it's the same way with kids. I mean,

if if they're interested in it, then chances are they're going to learn. But um

if you're just kind of trying to get them to be interested,

then uh it it may or may not work.

So, I think I'll move on to the next question,

also by Inmanas.

Have you ever had young children come

show great interest to you regarding

Buddha Dharma? And the answer to that is

no, although it's largely because I was

a recluse

for most of my time. Even when I was

living in a monastery with people coming

and going, I generally wasn't hanging

out with the little kids.

Um you know, there'd be people coming to

see me, would bring their little kids

with them, and I'd see them once, and,

you know, they'd be maybe paying

attention, or maybe running around,
squealing.

And um

and then the parents would make their
bows and go away, and the little kids
would go with them.

Um there is an old YouTube video of me
giving five precepts to a big group of
Burmese village kids,
and they were very well-behaved while I
taught them.

Uh

whether they actually learn anything or
not, I don't know.

So,

yeah, some kids are really keen on

offering offering food. That's one thing little kids can enjoy is, you know, putting food into a monk's bowl.

Some kids really really get into that.

So, I'll just move on to the next part of this uh multi-staged questionnaire from Inmanas.

Oh, okay. This is it This is on a different tack here. It is said that the youngest recorded arahant was seven.

What are your thoughts on this?

Well, uh it's possible.

Um some of those 7-year-old arahants, um seven is generally considered to be the minimum age for um

a person to be ordained as a novice.

And um some of those novices it it says

in the in the text that as soon as the
razor touched their head to to shave
their head so that they could be
ordained, boom, they became arahants. It
was like they were
it's like they were just ripe. You know,
or like a a yellow leaf
that on the tree that you just touch it
with your finger and it breaks loose and
falls down and some
you know, all it took was just the touch
of the razor on their head and that was
all it took, just click,
and they became enlightened. And whether
anyone actually became enlightened like
that, I really can't say because I

wasn't there.

So, um

I'll just move on to the next question

cuz there's uh

there's a little more on the same topic

here.

What is the youngest ever that one could be ordained? And I assume by ordained he means full ordination as a bhikkhu.

And that is um

I mean, at first there was no age limit.

According to the

vinaya or the the books of monastic

discipline,

there was no age limit. So, the Buddha's son Rahula was ordained as a kid.

But then later

the rule was changed so that you have to be 20 years old from conception. Because according to Theravada Buddhism, life begins at conception.

And so

Um yeah, so it'd be like 19 years and 3 months.

Unless you were born prematurely or something, would be the youngest that you could be ordained. Although before that rule was in place, according to the texts, kids were ordained as monks, but they were they didn't have the self-discipline and the maturity really to be good monks, and so the rule got changed.

And so the next question from Inmanus on the same theme is what is the youngest one can be a novice?

So

there is a rule

that

uh a person cannot be ordained as a novice unless he is 15 years old from conception.

And then there's like a an addition an addendum to this rule saying that if the kid is old enough to scare crows, then he can be ordained. And to scare crows, it means like I assume it would be the job of kids

um like to guard the fields during harvest time to keep flocks of crows

from just coming in and and ravaging the the rice fields or something.

So uh the kids would have to be on guard with rocks or something to scare the crows away. And um traditionally that is considered to be about seven.

So I'm pretty sure that the according to Theravada tradition, the minimum age for ordination as a novice tends to be seven. Although I've seen some very I mean practically toddler novices in my day.

But um who knows, maybe they could scare crows. I really can't say. But if you're old

enough to scare crows,
which means, you know, like, you know,
keeping them away from uh from the crops
or whatever,
then uh then you're old enough to be
ordained as a novice.

So, the next part of this question or
the next question I should say but from
Inman's, does the mind need to be at a
certain degree of maturity and
development to properly apprehend the
Buddha-Dharma?

Well, I mean, the more maturity and
development your mind has, the more
properly and completely you will
apprehend the Buddha-Dharma and the
highest levels of the Buddha-Dharma, you

know, like like enlightenment. I mean, you have to be completely mature and developed.

Um,

the more crude your mind is, the more crudely you'll understand it. I mean, there's all different levels like like in Shakespeare, there's all different levels, you know, Merchant of Venice, there's like, you know, crude body jokes and also some rather deep philosophy involved. You know, there's something for everybody and in Buddhism, it's like whatever wherever your mind the level of your maturity and development, I mean, that's you know,

there's a place for you that you can understand that and work with that and and develop more.

So, like with little kids, it's like Jataka stories and stories from the Dhammapada commentary and just learning the basics of five precepts and so forth and

you know, maybe the the the biography of the Buddha, you know, the the standard legend of Prince Siddhartha and all that.

And then gradually, you know, you you get more and more developed and the more maturity and development you have, you know, the the higher level of apprehension of Dharma you have until

finally you reach perfect apprehension
when you become enlightened.

And so, Inman's is the last question
here.

What is the best way to develop a young
one who shows interest?

Is there a recommended graduated
training?

Um,
maybe.

The thing is, I mean, it's I'm pretty
sure there's no instructions
in the poly texts on the proper way of
training children in Buddhism.

Um

I'd say that I'd go back to what I was

saying earlier. Like if they show an interest, then uh

um

telling them stuff that's easily understandable by children, you know, like

like illustrative stories

on basics of

basics of the five precepts and, you know, just telling them about karma.

I mean, they're they're really

interested in ghost story. Kids tend to be interested in like ghost stories,

past life regressions, that kind of

thing. They can be just fascinating. I'd

say the most interested kids have been

when I've been talking is just

talking about uh like my father I was
hypnotist and he had past life
regressions in himself. He also
uh hypnotized other people into having
past life regressions and stories like
that, they can be really interested in,
you know, they'll be wide-eyed, just
wrapped,
spellbound.

Um but uh

yeah, it's it's hard to say. I think it
would differ from kid to kid, to tell
you the truth. Some kids will be more
interested in one aspect of dhamma and
others would be more interested in
others, you know, some might be more

interested in

you know, doing good deeds and just the

practical aspect. Others might be more

interested in karma and rebirth or

or just, you know,

that sort of thing or just understanding

Buddhism just through,

you know, stories of the Buddha and so

forth. It's hard to say.

I'm really not an authority on teaching

children

because as I say, I tend to do avoid

children for many years. I mean, when

you're a hermit living in a forest, you

generally don't have much to do with

little kids unless they come with their

parents and the parents are just bowing

and maybe taking precepts, and then they leave again.

So, the next question is from Fred, and Fred asked this question somewhere.

And uh it wasn't in the usual channels.

It wasn't under the the recent Q&A.

Wasn't on the Discord server. But it was a question about why there is a third element

necessary for the conception of a human being. And the third element is uh In the texts, it's called the Gandhabba.

And um

that is referring to the spirit of the being who is to be um

like reborn into into the mother. Like

you have to have the the man and the woman come together.

And

you know, the the sperm and the egg, but there also has to be, you know, a being who is going to take rebirth that that enters at the moment of conception. So, the three have to come together, the egg, the sperm, and this this stream of karma.

You know, the spirit of the person to be reborn.

And uh Fred was uh

if I remember correctly, he was kind of implying that uh just the uh the genetics of the the mother and the father would kind of create a new person

or something like that. Or maybe the spirit just kind of splits off from the mother and father, but uh it really doesn't work that way. I mean, you can have

um

you know, uh

a very different spirit from or a very different being

um very different from both parents.

Maybe not genetically, but with regard to certain personality traits.

Um

So, yeah. I mean, you have they you have to have

um

some uh

some spirit, you know, some sort of

conscious spirit

um who enters into the uh the embryo,

the zygote, or whatever.

Which is kind of politically incorrect

because it does indicate from point of

view of Theravada that a human life does

begin at conception. And that

if there is no spirit, a human spirit

entering

the fertilized egg, then it just doesn't

grow.

I've considered that some stillborn

children might be a case of,

you know, there was just nobody um

occupying the body and it just

uh it just died.

So, the next question is from Erin.

And Erin says,

"Living in the Bible Belt, I see how much church serves as a deeply rooted support system and extension of family and community for Christians. The local churches have large family-oriented campuses set up to provide family-focused support, child care, cultural bonds, activities, and other needed family services. Families attend the same church for many generations, eat out every Sunday together after church, etc. Hearing about how most Asian monasteries in the US do provide a

similar service in the American Asian communities, do you think it will be possible for American Buddhism to ever provide this for US Buddhists? It seems most American Buddhists that comment on your Q&As face the choice of attending Asian monasteries and feeling a tad left out culturally, or a few fancy American places that are basically teaching political wokeness, charging high fees for faux Dharma spa retreats, and teaching the exact opposite of what the Buddha actually taught, like an extension of the Unitarian Church."

It seems to me that in order for Buddhism to grow and prosper in the US, it will need to fill the same gaps that

the Christian churches fill in regards to extended family and culture, could Buddhism be doomed to fail in the West if it never truly serves the needs of the culture and communities? Is any place in the US actually providing this kind of support for US Buddhists?

Um

Okay.

Well, Erin here makes a good point in that um there are a lot of um non-lefty Buddhists especially who want to bring their kids to uh to a Dharma hall or Dharma center and just have a place for them to learn elementary Dharma maybe or just have

sort of a dharmic environment for them
to hang out while the parents are
sitting in meditation.

Um

there have been children's retreats even
at the like the the really progressive
kind of places.

Um

Let's see.

Is any place in the US actually
providing this kind of support for US
Buddhists?

Um I assume so, but I really don't know
what they would be. I've I've heard of a
place in Australia
where

um it really was following what I

considered to be a good plan for a Buddhist monastery, which meant it was divided into three sections. You had like the monk section, which was pretty much off limits to lay people most of the time. You know, the monks would just be in retreat in this forest area in cabins. Then you'd have like the retreat center for lay people, the meditation hall and you know, associated buildings, maybe the office and everything there. And then you'd had sort of like a village for resident lay people. And the monks would go for alms through the the lay village or you know, maybe also through the meditation area if there was

uh you know, a retreat going on there
and people there.

And um you know, there'd be kids there.
You've got families living in the
village.

Um that sort of thing, but it it's
pretty radical. It's it's already kind
of deviating from uh
like normality for Western people.

So, I think what would happen is you'd
have to have

um like increased popularity or interest
in Buddhism

by people with kids, and then somebody
would take the initiative to like
organize a daycare,

um you know, somebody volunteering to

watch the kids while the parents are
meditating or listening to some long
philosophical

um you know, discourse or something.

And I think it would have to grow
organically like that, unless you've got
some Buddhist uh

you know, wealthy eccentric guy who just
wants to set up

something like that. I think another
idea is uh you know, just like a

Buddhist group setting up like a soup
kitchen or or something like that. Like

a lot of the Christian missionaries
would start off with, you know, offering
free medical care and free just stuff.

You know, just offering a service that people would be um like I they'd they'd they'd be accepting of, and then trying to to get the Buddhism or the the Christianity, I guess, in.

Uh something like that, you know, it's possible.

But uh I think right now it's just that Buddhism is is not really mainstream in the West. It's kind of a fringe movement, you so you're not going to have very many people enough to really form a nucleus of a community to begin with.

That's that's that's like the main

problem, I think, is uh

what few Buddhists there are in the West, relatively few, are you know, Asian immigrants, and to some degree their their offspring, or else it's uh you know, like the progressive ultra-leftist, you know, kind of quasi Buddhists who more interested in, you know, white guilt and global warming and so forth, than they are in what the historical Buddha actually taught in many cases.

So,

yeah, it's it's kind of a difficult situation, and uh

I think at present, the most realistic

approach to Buddhism is it's a personal thing.

Um you know, you can raise your kids as Buddhists and and so forth, but uh having

like the community church,

you'd have to have more Buddhists living in the same place, and not only more Buddhists, but more Buddhists who see more or less eye to eye with regard to how to interpret and practice Buddhism.

So, that's that's really the main issue is just the

you don't have enough of a density to get a community going in a one geographical location, so that something like conservative Western

Buddhism,

or um

like right-wing, non-leftist

more or less orthodox

Buddhism, Western Buddhism, um is mostly

online, or just a personal thing like

like loners,

because there just aren't enough of them

um living in groups. You know, you'd

have to have, you know, maybe 12 or or

20 living in the just within easy

driving distance, in order to even get

the daycare center going.

Uh something like that.

So, yeah, it is just getting started is

the most difficult part. I mean, this uh

um Buddhism is still in a very
vulnerable stage, and it's uh been led
astray to a very great degree,
especially
uh over the past several years,
with um
you know, it's just people all to mutate
it into a kind of uh
Buddhism-flavored cultural Marxism.
So, yeah, we'll just have to see how it
goes. I mean, I'm sorry I don't have any
really good solutions
to uh how to how to make more
Buddhists living in the same general
area. Maybe we need a really charismatic
um Theravada Buddhist teacher who can uh
just draw people to him, you know, set

up a really nice community and you know,
you have like cabins and stuff where
people can live and that kind of a
thing.

But, that would take

um money and effort and uh

those tend to be somewhat in short

supply in uh

in uh what we're talking about here.

So, I guess I'll just move on to the

next question, which is from Nardi.

And Nardi says,

"I read I read time to time the Tao Te

Ching, but I can't understand at what

point it can be used in real life. I see

the book as a mystical one, but you

can't follow the teachings like if you don't fight, they can't attack you because they will.

What do you think?"

Okay, the Tao Te Ching really is

um

mystical. I mean, it it has mystical elements to it, but it's not purely mystical. It's not only mystical. Uh a lot of it is political advice, apparently to rulers. You know, it's talking about the king does this and the king does that.

And um

so, it may have been composed at least in part as sort of a guide to enlightened ruling for Chinese kings.

Um but there are there are things in
there that uh

that are I mean, in addition to just
giving you some some wisdom, like
background wisdom for dealing with
samsara in general. Um

like for example, the advice in the Tao
Te Ching isn't so much as if If fight,
they can't attack you. It's just It's
more a matter of if you're invisible, if
you're totally anonymous, if you don't
stand out,

then uh you know, people you won't be
drawing trouble.

Something like that. I mean, that's
that's relatively

Yeah, you can practice that, you know.

Don't don't make a uh spectacle of yourself. Don't draw attention to yourself, and just stay anonymous, stay under the radar.

That's That is one recurrent teaching in the Tao Te Ching is essentially just uh be anonymous, and don't be anyone that stands out as anyone special, and you won't be drawing trouble upon yourself so much.

But uh yeah, the Tao Te Ching, it is It's nice to read. I've read it several times in uh various translations.

But for me, it's more just a matter of absorbing, you know, words of wisdom, and just kind of letting them soak in,

and uh maybe they'll fill a little gap
here and there in my in my heart or
mind, or whatever.

Um

because I'm really not a king.

And I actually read um It was an old
translation of the Tao Te Ching by this
He He was like a philologist and a
scholar. He really was not into Taoism
per se.

And he was saying that the whole Tao Te
Ching was just a manual for people to
survive. I think it was the Warring
States period of China, when which is
when it was supposedly composed,
or the the summer and autumn period, or

something like that, where uh China wasn't a unified nation. It was all these warring states, you know, it was like generals and warlords just invading each other back and forth. And um then uh the the the art of not being attacked um could really stand could really help be helpful. Maybe if civilization starts to break down in the West, then that sort of teaching of the doubt teaching may be more valuable. But even now, I mean, it's like our best uh our best defense against the government is just really you know, there are so many of us and we're such small fish

that they generally don't bother.

Um if you start getting famous or something, then they'll start paying more attention to you, but uh you can get away with a lot just from being unimportant.

And uh then there is some of that in the doubt teaching.

So, I'll just move on to the next question, which is from Nusquam.

I think I pronounced that correctly if there is a correct pronunciation.

"Hello," Nusquam says. "Any thoughts on what actually are four stages of enlightenment? I always thought that if in the time of Buddha, he gave one

sermon and 500 or 3,000 people became arahants instantly, then it doesn't sound plausible to me. Maybe stream entry is just becoming Buddhist or a monk, one returner attaining jhana or something." Yeah, I've had very similar thoughts about the four stages of enlightenment. Um I'm skeptical that it goes all the way that idea goes all the way back to the Buddha himself.

Um

and it talks about time of the Buddha, he gave one sermon and 500 or 3,000 people became arahants instantly. I mean, some there are texts of like Buddhas in past ages who

literally converted like billions or trillions of people with one sermon.

Um so, yeah, I mean, the Indians uh especially the ancient Indians, they just uh they really loved huge and unrealistic numbers for things.

So, let's see, the four stages of enlightenment.

Yeah, I think you can it is possible to detect traces of evolution of the theory. For example, in the the first suttas of a a text called the Itivuttaka, which is in the Khuddaka Nikāya, um the term anāgāmi or non-returner apparently is used in the sense of an

arahant.

And it does make sense that arahant is someone who doesn't return to saṃsāra.

An arahant is done.

And um

it may be that

systematizers decided to just divide up anāgāmis from arahants. Like sort of the way they divided up uh first jhāna into two. You know, they just

the the Indians were really into just analysis and just systematizing

everything. And so you got two words that mean the same thing. Somebody will come along and just give two different meanings to them.

Something like that.

Um sakadāgāmi, it really isn't mentioned in in the earliest texts. And I do think sotāpanna could be what Nyanasobhano is talking about where uh sotāpanna or a stream-enterer is just someone who, like in Christian terms, would be born again.

Like they become, you know, they're converted to Buddhism. They're they're like a a fresh devout follower. They've entered the stream. They've started living uh a spiritual life.

So, yeah, I also am skeptical of uh the uh

the Buddha actually teaching the four stages of enlightenment. Although

there's plenty of uh

representation of it in the suttas.

Nevertheless, like there is um

there's an obscure rule of discipline in

the Pātimokkha. It's uh pāti

pāṭidesanīya rule. There's only four

pāṭidesanīya rules.

And one of them is to uh

um

receive alms

to the point of causing hardship for a

family of sotapannas.

And

it makes more sense to interpret a

sotapanna as just like a new a new

Buddhist a new convert who's really rich

in faith to the point that they're

wanting to donate to the point of in making hardship for themselves.

And there are people like that. They'll just give you the shirt off their back. They're so eager to make offerings.

Um

So, the four stages I suppose I should review four first first stage of Buddhist sainthood you know, and and a Buddhist saint is someone who has at least had a glimpse of nibbana is the sotapanna. And it means stream enterer or stream attainer. And I do think that originally it could have meant or probably meant someone who just started

following

um dhamma.

You know, like a new convert to Buddhism or at least somebody who had had some kind of awakening and really started dedicating themselves to living a dharmic life. Then next comes the sakadagami or once-returner.

And you know, they they can they're only going to come back uh onto this worldly like the I think it's the sensuous realm one more lifetime or something like that. I'm really have not been interested in in even like memorizing the meanings of that.

Cuz there's lists of things that you know, sotapannas can't be like a sotapanna can't tell a lie if according to the the established system.

But um

in again in the oldest texts um there really is no mention of sakadagamis. And then as I mentioned um

in some really old texts like the first texts of the the ediwodaka um an anagami or non-returner who is like the the And

the third stage or the second highest stage of Buddhist sainthood is uh

um an anagami is just interpreted uh

apparently to mean the same as an

arahant. And then finally, the fourth

stage is an arahant. And then it's further complicated by having uh path and fruit for each one. So, each one has two levels.

And um according to Abhidharma, the the path um stage lasts just like, you know, just a a tiny fraction of a cent uh second.

Which I mean is is kind of pointless even to divide it out, but um there is uh

and there is evidence in the in the suttas that it really was supposed to last a lot longer than that, but um yeah, I am

I'm uh of the the school of thought that um

you know, just because something is in the text does not make it necessarily reliable, and I would guess that uh you know,

way less than half of the Pali Tipitaka could

uh reliably

represent what the historical Gotama Buddha actually taught.

Which um is unpleasant,

but uh even the Roman Catholic Church

back in the '70s was saying that uh

probably no more than 20% of the words

of Jesus in the New Testament are likely to be authentic.

And uh the words of Jesus were written down,

you know, generally within a century of the life of Jesus. And in India, where they've got uh less they had less concept of like objective history than the Greeks and the Jews had, and uh it wasn't written down for 500 years. So, I would guess that uh there's even uh more

um unreliability

with regard to uh quotes of the founder in the in the Pali texts.

So,

I think I'll just move on to the next question.

And this is from Ethel Seed. I don't

know how to pronounce this.

Ethel Seeg, Ethel Seeg, something like that.

And uh Ethel Seeg

says,

"A noticeable trend I've seen on dissident right or spiritual online mediums like Twitter and Telegram is a proposed fusion or melding of Buddhism with paganism, specifically Norse or northern paganism.

People like Hammer and Vajra, Elders of the Black Sun, and even Survive the Jive have spoken of this. Modern pagans already look towards Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism to inform European paganism

because of the paucity of original sources, but it seems that most are now specifically looking at Buddhism as an avenue or partner to explore paganism.

Some view this through a Vajra

Vajrayana lens. I assume he means

Vajrayana. Although maybe there is

Vajrayana. I'm not sure.

Some view this through a Vajrayana or

Vajrayana lens, seeing wrathful deities

like uh Yamantaka as being the same as

Rudra or Odin, while others see

Theravada as personal prac-

practive

as personal practice that is not at odds

with and can inform their pagan

practice.

Buddhism has always adapted to the indigenous religion of the region it's entered, Shinto in Japan, Bon in Tibet. So, could the way for traditional non-leftist Buddhism to take off in the West be for it to accommodate the indigenous religion of Europe, paganism? It's not unprecedented, Greco-Buddhism obviously, and both Buddhism and northern paganism are Indo-European and would seemingly be a better fit than say Bon and Buddhism. Obviously, there are potential problems, the ideas of gods, and it does not further. But the notion of a Buddhism-pagan fusion seems to definitely be a thing

and being talked about. So, do you see any future in such a venture?

Well,

I think the problem with paganism that I've mentioned before is that the living traditions died out. I mean, there are just vestiges of it.

And so, what you have with pagans nowadays

is they're really trying to create a replica. You know, it's sort of like the the replica of the Parthenon in like Nashville, Tennessee.

You know, just a scale model, like a as perfect of a replica as they can manage.

And uh with regard to the Parthenon, they had the old Parthenon to look at.

But with regard to,
you know, northern European paganism,
yeah, all you've got is vestiges, and
then people are trying to fill in the
blanks and create this
um you know, they're they're trying to
recreate something that has become
extinct.

So, I mean, it seems to me like why not
just go with the Buddhism? I mean,
Buddhism is still a living tradition.

You know, it's one of the few, arguably,
Indo-European traditions left in the
world.

Um there are a few others, especially uh
something I mean, you come even closer

to a a truly

uh Indo-European spiritual tradition

with uh you know, like

Vedism.

You know, like like primitive primitive

Hinduism,

that would come that would come fairly

close to what the uh ancient Greeks and

Romans were practicing.

Uh with fire sacrifices to the gods and

so forth.

But uh with regard to Buddhism,

um I mean, it's it's debatable just how

Indo-European Buddhism is. I mean, the

founder was an Indo-European, probably.

Although Buddhism has roots that go back

um into like the Indus Valley

civilization.

You know, you had um when when the the Vedics the Vedic speaking the Vedic Sanskrit speaking Aryans invaded Northwestern Burma or uh Northwestern Burma Northwestern India. There was already a civilization there. And the civilization apparently had uh sort of a a mechanistic atheistic largely pessimistic religion uh on which Buddhism to some degree, Jainism, and the Samkhya that I mentioned before, uh including some other traditions that no longer exist, you know, they have roots going back into that. They were strongly affected

by the Vedic Brahmanism.

But um

they weren't entirely just offshoots of Vedic Brahmanism. They weren't purely Indo-European.

But I mean, it's hard to say any religion that's purely Indo-European.

Like the Greeks got some of their deities from the the pre-existing uh like the Minoans or the the Pelasgians.

Like I read that Athena was probably uh like a Minoan goddess.

And uh Dionysius also, I think, was

um

Well, maybe he was Indo-European.

But some of them weren't.

So,

yeah, and yeah, that is the main problem for me is that um paganism that they're trying to incorporate into Buddhism is uh I mean they're trying to revive paganism to some extent by injecting some living tradition of a different system into it. But you might as well just go with the the uh original Buddhism or just start up a new system if you're able.

Um

also I think personally

I think that classical paganism

um you know like um neo-Platonism for example would be more compatible with with Dharma

than uh what little I know of northern
northern European Germanic kind of
ancient paganism.

But um

yeah I don't know it's like you're
trying to mix kind of a fringe thing
which is Buddhism with an even more
fringe thing which is like northern
European paganism.

And um

I don't know you you'll wind up with
sort of falling between two stools I
think because uh
um you're kind of bastardizing the thing
it seems to me. I mean it could work I'm
not I'm not saying that nobody should
try it.

And I mean it has been done before like uh like the Indo-Greeks when the Greeks invaded uh northwestern India they many of them converted to Buddhism and there are coins of especially King Menandros known to the terrible Indians as Milinda who had you know the Buddha on one side and and Athena on the on the obverse of the same coin.

And so they were they apparently uh joined their Greek polytheism with with Buddhism and and Buddhism obviously does have room for polytheism. There are plenty of of gods in Buddhism although they're not immortal gods they're just uh at a higher level than

we are. You know they live longer than we are they're more powerful than we are.

So, I mean

there's obviously room for some kind of polytheism in Buddhism.

Um if you want to add new gods like the Greeks did, the Greeks in in India and Bactria, then uh

yeah, maybe it'll work, although uh in the West, we we seem to have outgrown that to some degree or just moved on to something else.

I think just a more philosophical or a non-theistic Buddhism might actually uh

have more potential for popularity

uh in the West than an attempt to revive
like Germanic paganism with Buddhist
elements.

But uh

yeah, I'm I'm just guessing here.

So, I think I'll just move on to the
next question. And that's from BPat427.

And BPat427 says,

"Do you think Qualia or Qualia Research
Institute's goal of mathematically
describing subjective experience and map
out all possible conscious experiences
is based on a misunderstanding that
ultimate reality can be understood
intellectually?"

Well, I'm unfamiliar with Qualia or

Qualia Research Institute.

Um but I mean, if they think that they're dealing with reality, then obviously they're they're misunderstanding that ult- that that uh they're just misunderstanding ultimate reality.

Because ultimate reality really cannot be understood intellectually as BPat427 says.

And uh their goal of mathematically describing subjective experience and mapping out all possible conscious experiences, I think that is just grossly um oversimplifying the human mind. It's sort of like like

medicine nowadays is I think medicine is still in a relatively primitive state.

Like um before I went to Burma, it was just

uncontroversial that eggs were full of cholesterol and bad for your heart, and that they'd done research showing that you could

lengthen your expected lifespan by 3 years just by not eating eggs.

And then I come back and the eggs are eggs are fine. There's nothing wrong with eggs anymore. It's like the toast that you have with the eggs is more more toxic than the eggs themselves.

And um they're actually

doctors on YouTube

and probably writing act like scientific journals or journal articles, you know, talking about how like glucose is bad for you even though when I was in college, you know, taking biochemistry, it's like life is fueled by glucose. You know, you got the the TCA cycle, you know, metabolism, like aerobic respiration is based on the breaking down of a glucose molecule in in like incremental stages with a little bit of energy coming off every now and then. And you you trap the energy in ATP. And and then that that gets used throughout the cell for accomplishing work or or growth or whatever.

And now they're they're saying even
glucose is

is not good for you. And um

So, it's it's so complicated. It's sort
of like or or like environmental
science. It's the system is so
complicated

that you you I mean, you can make models
and maybe it's a little more accurate
than other models, but uh it's just it's
just hopeless that you're going to be
able to understand like this almost
infinite complexity. Because like in
mathematics, you can't even you can't
even work out like a three-body problem.
I mean, there's ways of approximating

it, but you can't like you've got three particles interacting with each other.

And you cannot calculate exactly what the effect is going to be because math only works with two at a time. And the three forces interacting are all simultaneous. And you can only deal with two at a time.

So,

I think it's just uh

any attempt at the the puny human intellect

to just, you know, nail down, figure out, you know, every possible conscious experience systematically.

Um yeah, I think that's just a fool's undertaking.

I mean, even if you do give like a number to every possible conscious experience, like so what?

You know, it's like you can give a number to every possible flavor, but you just reel off the number 62589, and nobody has ever tasted 62589. I mean, they wouldn't know what it tastes like.

And it's the same with these mental states. I mean, who knows what the mental state will be? You can come up with a number for it or whatever, but that's really just a number, just like this label that you're just sticking onto something

that you still don't understand.

So, I think I'll just move on to the next question.

And the next question is from Chaplin.

And this one is refreshingly easy.

Chaplin says, "How tall are you and do you work out?"

And then I'll have a drink.

Well, how tall I am,

according to my new driver's license,

I'm 6'2".

Although,

I think it might be more accurate to say

I'm 6'2 and 1/2 or possibly even 6'2 and

3/4.

And do I work out? Um

when I was a monk and living in

California, I I had

I moved into this room that had a

dumbbell there, like a 20 22-lb

dumbbell. And so, I would do a little

bit of

things like curls and stuff with that,

shoulder presses and stuff, but

um

since I started working at the sheet

metal shop, there's I'm working out all

day, you know, just carrying around

heavy loads and I mean, even if you're

using a a machine I I I run a machine

called a five-view machine, and you got

to take these big coils of metal and you

put a spindle into it, and then you you

turn this crank to tighten it up, and just turning that crank is good exercise.

So, yeah, I'm I'm working out by by working. I get paid to work out.

And I'm in relatively good shape, I suppose, for a guy my age.

So, I'll just move on to the next question.

Also by Chaplin.

After fasting for 23 hours a day or longer for 30 years as a monk, have you noticed a change in your body or mind since going back to an American diet?

How do you compare the traditional Asian foods to your new American diet?

Well, it is true that I I ate one meal a

day for 30 years with very few exceptions, maybe sitting on an airplane where they just give you this little meal.

Um I might eat more than one.

But um

have I noticed a change in my body or mind? Well, the main change, most noticeable change in my body, I think, is uh I gained about 20 at least 20 lbs within a matter of months after becoming a layperson again. So, I'm thicker.

Pretty much my whole body is thicker, except maybe my legs. I still got skinny legs.

Um

change in my

body or mind. My mind, I don't know.

It's like sometimes if you eat a lot of food, you just get sleepy. And that was that I was that way in Burma, also.

That's why I started drinking coffee after lunch in Burma just so I wouldn't go into a doze like the lion after it stuffs itself on gazelle meat.

Um

So, yeah, since I eat more

since I eat more than one meal a day, um that kind of

uh lassitude or lethargy or whatever it is, um

yeah, it can happen more often. That's

one reason why uh Buddhist monk is supposed to eat just one meal a day.

Um

Let's see. How do you compare the traditional Asian foods to your new American diet? Well, the traditional Asian foods were essentially rice.

Um

rice and like beans. If I was lucky, I like beans, but uh beans were considered poor people's food and they tried to give monks the best food they could, and so sometimes you wouldn't get very many beans.

Um

You get little minnows. I lived near

rivers sometimes where you just get like
these little
salted fish that were whole.

Um

You get
meat, like regular farm meat, on uh
holidays mostly.

And uh it was relatively fresh, you
know.

I mean, most of the people that offered
me food were farmers, so you get
relatively fresh food usually.

Um

And then how does that compare to my new
American diet? Well,
uh I like my new American diet better
because I have never was much of a rice

eater. I didn't like rice much. I was more of a bread eater.

And now I can eat bread every day, which is nice.

Uh also, cheese.

Uh East Asians really are not much into dairy products.

I was uh largely a vegetarian before I became a monk, and then ironically after I became a Buddhist monk, I had stopped being a vegetarian. Partly because sometimes I'd be living in very poor semi-desert areas of Central Burma where um if the crops failed, which would be at least once every 3 years, um you know, just through lack of rain,

lack of irrigation,
then your your your your diet can
consist largely of just sort of chewy
pink rice and
and pork and maybe some like badass
cookies,

like real cheap

I don't know what kind of cookies they
would be. They're They're not good
cookies.

And I I mean, you're just pretty much
living on that.

So, I think my new American diet is more
balanced.

And uh

although there's more processed food in
it, I think overall it may be a little

more healthy. Certainly more clean
since uh Burmese villagers uh
they don't have indoor plumbing or
anything. It's uh
um sanitation is somewhat of a problem.
And uh also little refrigeration, so you
eating some foods is are just danger
food, like like shrimp.

Shrimp is is always a a coin toss on
whether you're going to wind up with the
explosive trots or not.

So, yeah, I prefer
my new American diet with the occasional
bowl of ice cream.

And uh
also, I can just go to the refrigerator

and eat whatever I want

within reason.

And I can uh whenever I want within

reason.

So, let's see.

I mean, there are certain advantages.

And I should I should go back to uh

uh changes in my body. Um

I've noticed I've got less

It seems like I've got less strength and

flexibility in my legs now. Although

probably more strength in my upper body

now that uh I'm a lay person again. I

mean I used to sit in the full lotus for

hours every day and uh

I don't know if I could even

I don't I don't know how long I could

sit cross-legged anymore.

I sit on chairs now. I used to disdain chairs. I used to be like a snob and refuse to sit on chairs, but uh now I sit on chairs.

Kind of kind of wimping out.

So, I think I'll just move on to the next question.

Which is from Venatrix.

Venatrix.

You You got some You got some names.

People that ask questions got names here. Venatrix or Venetrix.

What do you think of Oh, I should say

Venatrix says

"What do you think of the common Tibetan

practice of lay people only taking a certain number of the five precepts? For example, Tibetan laymen will often not take the vow to abstain from intoxicating substances while taking the other four. Do you think a practice like that this is legitimate or skillful, specifically for Buddhism in the West?"

Well, I have met Burmese people who they say, "Well, I keep three precepts

or or four or whatever." And in a way it's it's honest. I mean, if you're going to take five precepts, you're going to undertake them and then just knowing full well you're going to be breaking one or two of them,

it's probably better just to be honest
and

just maybe tell the monk, you know, "I
can't keep, you know, number whatever it
is."

Um

So, I mean keeping any precepts is
better than not keeping any.

So, I mean if you're keeping one
precept, that's better than keeping zero
precepts.

So, I mean it does happen.

And I guess there's a certain amount of
integrity to that. So, I think I don't
see any problem with that.

And uh let's see, especially for

Buddhism in the West.

Yeah, I mean it would it would be, you know, equal for East or West, I think.

Um just uh

do your best.

Yeah.

So, finally, we've got a question from Matthew. This is the last question.

And Matthew says,

"You conclude your article on my blog on the Mahasi method by saying U Jotika's method is much better. Can you perhaps give a very brief description of this method and speak a bit on why you feel it is a superior method? Lastly, can you comment on the Jotika method as a tool for lay people in comparison to what,

say, Mahasi or Goenka?

Kind regards and thank you."

Well, this is surprisingly difficult question for me cuz I knew U Jotika or as he is known in Burma, he's Mahamyan U Zodka because J is pronounced like Z in with a Burmese accent.

So,

Mahamyan U Zodka, I knew him and I met with him a number of times. He was ordained in the same tradition as me.

And um

he he spoke perfect English. He spoke English better than most Americans, I think. He's very intelligent.

And uh I think possibly um

to his advantage, he was raised a Muslim and then converted to to Buddhism as a young man.

Um and

for some reason that can that can make a stronger religion if you convert to it rather than just being born into it.

Um

I liked his method better.

Uh I really do not recall all the details of his method if I ever knew them.

Um he's

he relies to some degree on Western Western psychology.

But um the main reason why I think his method was better and why I said that

his method was better is because he practiced contemplation. What in Christianity is called contemplation.

Like he he told me once that he can just sit for hours just empty, not thinking anything.

And it wasn't like you're just zoned out in a stupor. I mean, he was wide You're wide awake. In fact, if you're going to sit that way, if you're not just in a trance,

um if you sit just wide awake and not thinking anything, I mean, you got to be very mindful because you got to catch each thought as it starts to arise.

Cuz if you don't, you know, it just

catches you unaware and next thing you know, you're thinking about stuff. But so you've got to be able to just watch your mind very carefully. And then as soon as any thought starts to arise, you know, it just the the mere attention of it just causes it to flatten back out again. And you're just sitting there like, um you know, like you're walking through a forest and an arrow hits a tree right next to you. You know, it's like you just stop and you stand wide awake just listening. Just that kind of mental state.

And um

he seems to have been very good at that.

Plus, he just uh

didn't follow along with um

like the Mahasi method is very much uh

um

a lot of emphasis on Abhidhamma and so forth. And and U Zotika U Jotika really didn't pay much attention to that. He would His method was based more on his own his own experience. He started off with the tongue puller method, which is what I started off with.

And uh just kind of developed what worked best for him. And it turns out that what worked best for him was very similar to what I found out worked best for me.

And you know, you start off when your

your samadhi isn't strong,
you know, you start off with like a busy
kind of meditation. If your mind is just
very active, you know, wanting to think
and everything, you have to do you have
to like um train the thoughts. You know,
you have to have labeling and you know,
your mind has to be given something to
do. Because if you try to do like a very
um

like a very lucid kind of
very quiet, but your mind is
hyperactive, it's just going to go all
over the place. But on the other hand,
if your mind is like settling down and
getting peaceful and focused, and you're
still at the ABCs, just grinding away

with labeling, you know, in-breath,
out-breath kind of a thing, then uh
yeah, you're just wasting the
opportunity, you're wasting your
potential.

So,

you gradually cultivate a mind that is
more clear and quiet, and then you get
more clear and quiet meditation methods
until finally your mind is just
completely clear and quiet
while at the same time you're wide
awake.

And U Jotika

seems to have incorporated that into his
practice

to a much greater degree than Mahasi or Goenka. And that's that's why I like it.

But if you're really interested, you might want to

do a search on U Jotika

uh on the internet or Mahamyan

U Jotika.

And you might get more details on his method. But the main reason why uh I said I I liked his method better than the Mahasi method

is uh partly because one time I asked him what is his opinion of the Mahasi method, and he said, um you can get benefit from practicing it, but it is a limited method. And I agree with that.

It is It does seem to me to be a limited

method. And his method was less limited because he was getting into deeper, more contemplative states. And that's why I liked it better.

And that's uh that's it. That's the that's the last question of the evening or the morning or whatever time you're watching this.

So, uh that's it. And if you have any more questions,

I'm quite willing to do my best to answer them to the best of my capacity.

So, leave them in the comments below, or if you have access to the Discord server, you can ask there.

If uh you have access to my subscribe

star channel, you can ask there.

And uh

my URL links are below including the
books that I have for sale
through Amazon.

And uh my uh

social media links as they happen to be
and my blog and so forth and uh
be happy.

hello and welcome to episode 27 of
question and answer i am your host panel
bossom and this is your co-host
peepers
and um
i'm doing it out here on the veranda as
a change of pace
and moving the glass so the kitty
doesn't drink my red bull and lemonade
and i've got
the usual
longish list of good questions
to try to answer and so i'm going to try
and do that with the kitty
walking all over my lap
so

the first question is from

bodhisattva969

and

bodhisattva969 says

i have already asked several questions

via email to theravada temples or

sanghas in germany which are mainly led

and attended by ties unfortunately

questions or suggestions are usually not

answered at all hence my question isn't

there a need for dedicated people within

these sanghas who also want to advance

buddhism in western countries

those who want to become buddhists

integrate those more who are interested

in buddhism too

i know buddhism doesn't really

proselytize

but isn't it worth spreading the
teaching and if those in charge are not
interested in spreading buddhism step by
step those who are willing should take
over

well that's that's a good question
and

due to my uh or according to my
years of experience living in
asian temples in the west
at least a few years

um

the thing is asian monks have a very
different

outlook on reality and on buddhism than

westerners do so even when western or
when asian monks like burmese monks is
what i mainly have experience with
when burmese monks try to teach
to

westerners

um there's like a culture gap there's a
culture barrier you know they they have
like a medieval attitude

towards um

towards buddhism in general i mean they
just consider everything in their
tradition to be just gospel

and westerners

just

don't

don't really swing that way like

venerable tong pulo seattle who was a
great monk a wise monk he would come to
america and give sermons and he'd be
mentioning you know the flat earth
floating on water and buddhist cosmology
and so forth that most westerners really
can't take it very seriously including
most monks
so that's a major problem with asian
temples promulgating dhamma
is that asian monks
have
an approach to buddhism that most
westerners
just don't
i mean they don't find it acceptable

it's just a non-starter

and there are some

asian monks who try to become fluent in

english because there's also the

language barrier

and um you know they try and there are

certain types of westerners and just the

faith-oriented westerners who are

willing to

um accept whatever they're told with

regard to buddhism from you know an

exotic asian monk

and um

but i mean it's just not going to be the

majority of people who might potentially

be interested in in terrible buddhism

so it's going to take western monks i

think who are going to be
um mainly promulgating
theravada buddhism
or anything remotely resembling
traditional theravada buddhism in the
west because as you may know western lay
people who teach theravada
mostly
are teaching you very watered-down and
mutated version of terrabotta and it may
take uh a mutated version of theravada
with certain things omitted like the
cosmology at least you omit the the part
about taking it seriously
um
in order for really

terrible buddhism to
strike traction to take root in the west
which it really hasn't done very well
yet i have to admit
and part of the reason for that
is that
theravada buddhism
is ancient indian it was
designed to fit ancient indian culture
and
it has been accepted by
um certain asian cultures
that were based on classical india
thailand burma sri lanka all of them
have as their classical civilization
that they turn to for culture ancient
india just like in the west we turn to

rome or in to some degree greece

um

i mean mainly western europe and america

have their culture um like

resting upon the foundation the

classical foundation of rome

and in southeast asia most of southeast

asia and also sri lanka they're looking

to india for their classical inspiration

or just their their wise ancients

and so it fit easier it worked better

for southeast asia than it's working

from the modern west with regard to

accepting an ancient indian tradition

with ancient indian cosmology and

ancient indian

just assumptions about reality

so

let's get back to this question here a

little bit isn't there a need for

dedicated people within these songs who

also want to advance buddhism in western

countries well i think most of them do

want to advance buddhism other than just

the asian monks who just want to live

like

kind of like neutered house cats in a

temple and just lie around and get

attention from lay people and get fed

every day i mean there are monks like

that too

but um

a lot of them really would like to

spread dharma in the west they would like
to become great teachers in the west if
possible

um either for

you know personal reasons or just for

the selfless desire to promulgate dhamma

but as i say there is a cultural barrier

that really interferes with that

so

uh western buddhism is going to have to

change

to some degree

i mean like

terra vada buddhism if it's going to

prosper in the west it is going to have

to change to some degree

otherwise it's just doomed to be
a fringe movement
or it's going to be it's doomed to be
what it's sort of becoming now which is
just a

very watered-down mutated

semi-semblance of theravada buddhism

and there'll be a few more questions

about that particular issue a little

further down on the scroll here

um

but it's that's like the big issue is

like what can you change what can you

not change or what should you not change

and of course different people are going

to have different ideas about that but

that's not really the question here so i

think i may just move on

so the next question is from nusquam

and nusquam says what which nikaya is

there behind you he's referring to the

last

q a that i did i had i usually do q and

a's in in the spare bedroom with

it's sort of like an office and and den

and so forth and i've got a bookcase

behind me and like right there

in most of these q a videos there's a

big brown book that he's asking about

and that's uh

biku bodies and yanamoli's translation

of the uh majime nikaya

let's see he's he asked which nikaya is

there behind you i've noticed
cover from wisdom publications yeah so
the brown the brown one from wisdom
publications is the majim nikaya
and um the original translation was by
nyana moly who was a great translator he
was really brilliant
and but he was a little idiosyncratic he
had some strange ideas about translating
for example he tried very hard
to have
one word get translated always into the
same english word
and
different poly i mean the same poly word
can have different meanings according to
different contexts and he's trying to

come up with an english word that comes
as close to that as possible and um
like brahma he he interpreted as divine
so like a brahmana he would call a
divine

or you know the brahmalokas the divine
world and so forth

so um that was just a little too
uh unorthodox

for b cuboty who is a good translator
despite his his politics he is one of
the best translators

we've got so he just sort of made a
little more orthodox you know just using
the usual terms you know sati is
mindfulness for example

and um

so he just sort of uh

smoothed out some of the

some of the stranger parts of nanamoli's

translation but nanamoli was an

excellent translator

and uh it might have been best just to

have left it the way it was but

there we are b kuboti has uh he was he's

a grown-up man he can make his own

decisions i suppose

so yeah the the answer to that is it's

the majima nikaya

so the next question is from joe doe

and joe doe

asks

do you know of any techniques to

overcome sleepiness when it arises in
meditation

and there are

there's at least one entire discourse
um probably to be found in winia or the
rules of monastic discipline which the
buddha is telling a monk what to do if
he's

if he's really sleepy you know he's
supposed to be meditating he's not
supposed to sleep a lot ideally a monk
who's a serious meditator should only
sleep about four hours a night and i
tried that and it is not easy i only
managed one month averaging less than
four hours every night and that was some

of the best meditation of my life if my meditation is not going well i just need to sleep more

but um do i know of any techniques for overcoming sleepiness when it arises in meditation

um possibly one of the easiest techniques is just get up and do walking meditation because it's very difficult to fall asleep when you're walking i i've been told that it is possible

but um

you know setting aside sleepwalking

but um that that's one another um i should have looked up the discourse but um i just play these uh off the cuff

here

and uh i remember you know one is
visualizing light

um

one is just sort of rubbing your face
and rubbing your pulling on your ears
and that kind of thing

um

one is uh like the standard
western um

technique of just splashing cold water
on your face that works too

um there is one kind of naughty one that
i came up with

um when i was living in a burmese forest
and that was the same time that i was
doing less than four hours a night of

sleep

um i had this rule that

i didn't have

an alarm clock but i had this rule that

if i wake up and i've already slept at

least four hours i have to get out

and i was keeping track of how much i

was sleeping

and um

i had it was it was like a desperation

technique i mean i'm not necessarily

endorsing this but it did work for me

and that is just to um

how do i say this

um

i would sort of fondle myself a little

bit to kind of cause arousal and then i

would stop

and then just the arousal i mean

obviously just from the the word arousal

indicates that you know you're you're

more awake

and so that worked for me although it

might not work if you're like at a

meditation retreat or some such you

might get kicked out

but i was living by myself in a forest

at the time

um

let's see what other techniques

i mean just remonstrating with yourself

i suppose

um

but uh yeah i think those are the main
ones that that are mentioned in the text
uh one is is

getting up and doing walking meditation
visualizing light splashing water on
your face or just like rubbing and
pulling on your

on your ears or you know rubbing your
face and that sort of thing kind of get
the circulation going more

um i suppose

um getting back to that kind of arousal
technique just thinking any kind of
thought that gets your heart beating
faster is going to is going to help
maybe

do a little contemplation of death

or something

but um yeah if you look in the in the

polytechs there are

actual discourses

um explaining what to do and the kitty

is rubbing up against the microphone

like a silly kitty

so i'll just move on to the next

question

and the next question is also by joe doe

and that is do you believe levitation is

real well i do believe that it's

possible and um

i think that it probably has happened

not only

in buddhists and hindus but uh there was

some famous

catholic

i think it was a catholic monk he's a
saint saint

it wasn't saint francis of assisi but i
think it might have been another saint
francis it was some saint that had a
sort of common saint name with with a
more famous

uh person with the same name but um
there was some

english

i think he was some sort of english uh
minister or something like like a
political minister

and um he very much i mean he heard the
rumors of this this christian monk who

would levitate and so he actually hid in
a closet

and and is like looking through the
crack in the door

to uh

to see this this monk and he apparent
according to the story he did meditate
or levitate and then he converted over
to roman catholicism and i guess um
saint theresa of avila

would go into such ecstasies when she
would take communion

which is a big deal among some catholics
because they think they're actually
committing ritual cannibalism of jesus
so i mean she would go into such

ecstasies that she would just rise up
in front of entire congregations
supposedly according to the story
so um i believe anything is possible
just about

so if levitation can be imagined that
would make it possible at least in a
metaphysical sense so yeah

and then joe doe says cheers mate
so yeah cheers and so i'll just move on
to the next question

by fred

fred says from what i can understand
there was no chanting at the buddhist
time is chanting unnecessary cognition
well yes and no with regard to whether
there was chanting in the buddhist time

which is

um i mean it depends on how you would

define chanting i guess

because

in the buddhist time there was

i mean the scriptures were not written

down the teachings of the buddha were

not written down and so they had to be

memorized and so there was a lot of that

going back to very ancient times

um

of just

memorizing by heart

certain teachings

and then you would generally recite it

which could be called chanting as a way

of not forgetting it and i used to do a
lot of a lot of that sort of thing
although i've forgotten pretty much
everything except the metal suta and a
few little bits and pieces

um

but with regard to actual chanting like
in a in a sing-song voice i mean you're
not using a regular conversational tone
of voice like i'm using now

um it's actually against the rules of
monastic discipline a monk is not
supposed to

recite in a sing-song voice even though
lots of them do it in fact some burmese
monks that i have i have met will
actually cultivate their own peculiar

sing-song voice when they chant there's
a kind of hallmark you know sort of
their own personal gimmick
and the kitties rubbing up against the
microphone again

so let's see where was i oh yeah the
chanting so technically chanting in a
kind of sing-song voice is actually
against the rules even though
plenty of monks do it

um

with regard to

uh just reciting

um

in it for chanting purposes like like
for

not just for remembering

something or you know reciting it to

someone else so they can hear it is you

know sort of like protection chance and

so forth

and they go back to ancient times i mean

it's

i mean one can debate whether the buddha

himself originally taught that you

should chant the meta suta to protect

you from spirits for example or that you

should

chant the khanda suta or recite the

khanda sutra to protect protect you from

like snake bites but they are found in

the text like the kanda suta is found in

winia or the the book of books of

monastic discipline

that some monk was bitten by a snake and
died and so the buddha taught the kanda
suta which is sending meta and blessings
to all beings including legless ones
which are snakes

and uh

according to on the text you know if you
chant suto then

you won't die from snake bite even if
you are bitten you will survive

so um

otherwise i mean

chanting is unnecessary cognition it can
be used as a kind of meditation it's
sort of a prolonged mantra or something

so i mean it does have a function i
think

it is acceptable in orthodox buddhism
to chant
sutras

not only so that you don't forget them
but it's just your mind is on something
wholesome you know it gets your mind
onto something wholesome

and that reminds me that um

i had a friend in burma he was a texan
hermit who lived in this big hollow tree
and he said one time he was bitten by
one of those big orange centipedes or
these giant centipedes that live in
southeast asia

and um you know they're as big around as

your finger and they got these big fangs
on them

and i've met a few people who have been
bitten by them and this this hermit said
that uh it hurts so bad you can't do
anything you can't meditate you can't
sleep so he would just sit there and
enchant

just to get his mind off the pain
and um you know i just kind of had his
mind on something more positive or
wholesome

so i mean for that purpose
you you could do chanting also just to
get your mind focused on something
relatively wholesome

um but although of course it helps if
you understand what you're chanting if
you're chanting in poly and you don't
know paul you've just memorized the
sounds so that you're
you're chanting this blah blah blah
which it i mean some people do that
um i wouldn't expect nearly as much of a
benefit

um as if you were
actually understanding what you were
chanting

so the next question is from nardi
and nardi says i have a dilemma in the
issue of mindfulness

do you consider forcing with all the
force oneself

to hear now as mindfulness or
mindfulness is just a passive
observation of whatever appears
so that seems to be the main question
the next is explanatory it's like
whenever i try to be mindful in the
daily life i end up meditating at work i
think i always had this extremist
mindset and now i know how to do
something i do it till i go in depth
um or once i know how to do something i
do it till i go in depth i have also
this other tendency of escaping reality
and that's why i wanted to become a monk
for some years
sometimes co-workers think i'm

distracted while i'm basically
meditating and focusing on something
else

when i force myself with all my will
just here now without observing nothing
i am focused like a hunting animal and
to me everything is more easy i do this
since i was a kid mostly because i don't
like my thoughts and feelings which are
very dark and by doing these
these things don't bother me
and by doing this things don't bother me
let's say my family lives
a very bad karma and a lot of bad things
has happened to my ancestors including
disputes among family members killings
persecutions from the communist regime

and as some people say black magic

so um

the uh the main question here is just

the first part

um do you consider forcing with all the

force

oneself to hear now as mindfulness

or

mindfulness is just a passive

observation of whatever appears

so it can be either way i mean

beginning level mindfulness you may be

doing like what the mahasi method tells

you to do it's like when you are

mindfully noting something it's like

you're hitting it with a stick you know

it's like your attention is the stick
and you're just tapping it over and over
again and labeling it you know giving it
some word

some some label

um but as you get better at it it

becomes more and more effortless

so either way it could be mindfulness so

long as you are focused on whatever is

in the here and now

um i mean there are other kinds of

mindfulness you can be mindful of the

qualities of the buddha for example but

with regard to saudi patana um in this

sense

it's um

you know you're just in the present

moment and at first if you're not good at it yet you know your mind just keeps wandering you know your mind has this excess energy you have to apply the energy of your mind to some kind of busy work to keep it from wandering away again and again and that includes the the labeling for example and then the better you get at it the more effortless it becomes until ideally um you just get to the point where you're just always being mindful like and like an art presumably would be so either way works although if you're

able to be mindful effortlessly that is better than pounding away at it but pounding away at it is better than just just daydreaming and fantasizing and thinking about what you want for dinner so the next question is from

rob alias dhamma farmer

and rob says pano

what are your thoughts on mindfulness in terms of physical exercise one of your previous

one of your previous q a

you mentioned the method of sheet metal working and your application in terms of mindfulness to that task i have found great benefits of running or slow jogging with a low heart rate over the

last year but have only just come to think of this as greatly beneficial in terms of being in the present staying with the breath and not allowing the mind to wander it produces good and clarifying mental states with science backing up the claims in terms of endorphins and culmination of mitochondria as examples

i remember a while back hearing of a sect of monks that would run back-to-back marathons to enhance spiritual practice although i may have this wrong what are your thoughts and are there any

scriptural examples of physical training
as such

i would add that 2 500 years ago people
would have walked

an awful lot more and would not

have being as fat and lazy as today and

would not have being as fat and lazy

yesterday so this concept of exercise

may be a bit too modern cheers

okay

well

monks are allowed

to exercise

just for the sake of being healthy

although

um if it's for the sake of looking buff

or self-beautification or anything that

it is uh

not permitted

strongly discouraged

so let's see

where are we getting to the question

part here i found great benefits in

running the slow jogging

um

yeah i mean with regard to scriptural

examples of physical training really

there is the only exercise that is

encouraged for monks is walking

like um

monks would uh have

like indigestion or something like right

after they ate their daily meal for

example and the buddha encouraged them
to do walking meditation

but really the whole point of being a
monk is just to be healthy enough to
practice dhamma i mean you're not going
for a good physique necessarily

i mean they tend to be pretty skinny
and um

so yeah i mean there's

there's like swimming for exercise is

i mean it's it's very questionable

um

weight lifting that kind of thing

calisthenics

i mean there's no endorsement of it in

the in the ancient polytechnics that i'm

aware of

um

although i mean there's there's just no
mention of it i think that calisthenics
it might have been known to i don't know
gladiators or or soldiers or something
you know their ancient soldiers might
train with lead swords just to you know
strengthen their arms

but um

yeah for monks is i mean buddhism is
very otherworldly especially you know
ancient buddhism

and so

yeah being healthy is one thing but
just being buff or
or whatever is something else

so

yeah i think ancient india

it just wasn't as

like

matter oriented you know your body was

just this

thing that you wore

and if you were really striving for

dhamma it was just this thing that you

used to practice dhamma

so

yeah there's not much mention in all of

physical training i mean there came to

be that in other schools you know like

xiao lin anyone who watched the old tv

show kung fu or the various wire foo

movies

may know that uh you know some mahayana
sects

um

they would

they would practice you know martial
arts at the very least dodging spears or
whatever

so there is that but that was more of a
mindfulness exercise i think than a way
of exercising the body and strengthening
it

um yeah in buddhism it's just you know i
guess you'd be more like water

now the strength of water like the
outdate ching is more than you know what
is hard and is brittle and breaks but

what is soft and and flows you know it's
it's more flexible and
less likely to be
damaged or something
so

yeah i guess uh i guess that kind of
answers that question there's really not
much mention of

uh physical exercise you know as you
know for the sake of fitness

in in the text it's just uh i guess

that's more of a modern concept or

uh if it's pre-modern it was uh for

gladiators and things that were really

this worldly instead of you know

striving for something beyond this world

and one of the dogs is crying

and we'll get to that we've got a

question about dogs coming up

so i think i'll just move on to the next

question

and rob

elias dama farmer says i've been sitting

oh i've been sifting through the older q

and a's and playing ketchup on missed

episodes i found myself in hysterical

laughter in some parts especially when

you read

the pp poopoo gay but sex questions from

a bizarre commenter with a straight face

it got me thinking what is the most

stupid question you have ever been asked

also what is the most bizarre or

excommunication level thing anyone has
ever asked you to do

loving the q a's

books and content sincerely thanks and
met um

um

let's see what's i guess this is a
two-part question so what's the most
stupid question you have ever been asked
well as the saying goes there are no
stupid questions there are only stupid
people

but um it seems to me

that

the questions i receive unless they're
like

pointed rhetorical questions trying to

make a point

um

i've i've received some strange ones but

i wouldn't say that any of them is

really bad or stupid i mean if they

really want to know the answer

but usually when you come up with

stupid

or just stupidity

you know with regard to comments and so

forth is people making assertions is

they're not asking questions because

they think they already know the answers

those are the stupidest people the

people that are so sure that they know

everything or at least everything you

know that's relevant at at the moment

that um

yeah those those are the the people that

make the stupidest remarks and um i mean

i don't want to be singling out anybody

but i would say that yeah the most

stupidity that you you come upon is

people just making flat out assertions

you know they're not asking questions

because if you're asking a question it's

it's a kind of humility you know i mean

you have to have a certain amount of

humility to ask a question because you

are tacitly admitting that you don't

know

unless of course it's like a pointed

you know sort of a naughty question

so

yeah i don't i don't want to single out anybody and hurt somebody's feelings or something so i'll just move on to the next part of this question which what is the most bizarre or excommunication level thing anyone has ever asked you to do

um

i think probably it would just be like people who were there were a few western people who were my supporters you know they were actually supporting me they're just saying why don't you just drop out and get a job

you know they just did not see the point
of having to feed a monk every day you
know the monk isn't allowed to store his
food

yet and he has to have somebody give him
food every morning if he's going to eat
and

a lot of western buddhists people who
consider themselves to be
sincere buddhists or even buddhist
teachers

they just don't get it they don't see
the point of that
so

i mean that's not really excommunication
level but it's it's you know being
deroged from the song level because

they're just asking you know why don't
you just quit

because they really do not see the point
of being a monk or they don't think that
it's important enough

that people should actually do it
especially in the west

um with regard to a bizarre
question or a bizarre thing anyone has
ever asked me to do

man that's a that's a tough one

uh you know just why don't you just uh
you know have sex or something you know
it'd be something like that i think
you know while still being a monk that
is

so yeah i'm sorry to disappoint rob in
his

question for uh

stupid and questions and bizarre

requests but um

none really come to mind to tell you the
truth

so

sorry maybe maybe someone can ask a
really stupid question next time and
then i can uh

i can bring it up

so next question also from rob alias
dama farmer

and he says i recently read a comment
section interaction between you and
someone on the politically incorrect

theravada video

with ajahn punadamo and brian

the person insisted the buddha did not

even teach about rebirth

could you explain if this is some kind

of edgy [_] posting or there are some

buddhists who question the idea of

rebirth by all rights if you don't

believe in rebirth then the vast

majority of the buddha's teachings are

automatically invalid for that

individual thank you

well as it turned out just a few nights

ago i watched a debate

between ajahn brahmali i think is his

name

and stephen batchelor

on

traditionalism versus secularism in

theravada buddhism and it was a good

debate i would i would recommend it

maybe i might even include the link

below this video

um

but stephen batchelor considers himself

to be a buddhist he's written books

about his he was a buddhist monk i think

he was a tibetan monk for a few years at

least

he knows a lot about buddhism he just

doesn't believe in rebirth

and um

it seems weird to me that i mean on the

one hand buddhists believe in the first
noble truth to exist is to suffer
but if you don't believe in rebirth
then it seems like the logical obvious
thing to do would just be to commit
suicide not that i'm advising anyone to
commit suicide but that would just seem
to be the logical conclusion you know if
to exist is to suffer
and you want to be free of suffering and
there is no rebirth
well there you go
but uh yeah apparently a lot of
westerners i'm i i assume i
have probably met at least one asian
buddhist

who didn't believe in rebirth

but i mean there's a lot of it in the

west it's it's called secular buddhism i

think

and stephen bachelor was saying

you know maybe the buddha was just uh

you know he was a product of his culture

the culture believed in reincarnation

and so he was just going along with that

and it doesn't necessarily make it true

which was i think is kind of a

a weak argument because i mean if you

don't want to follow what the buddha

said i mean nobody's forcing you to be a

buddhist especially in the west

so i mean if he wants to believe some

spiritual system that doesn't include

rebirth why doesn't he just

you know follow his own idea and not

necessarily call it buddhism

so i think a stronger

argument

which might have got him to uh win the

debate with ajam brahmali

um is

you start with a text like the atakawaga

like

in my opinion the oldest large chunk of

really archaic early buddhism that still

exists

is the atakawaga of the sutonipata

and it's not dealing with metaphysics or

rebirth it's it's just dealing with the

practical you know in this moment

process of waking up and it's don't

believe anything

don't i mean don't i mean if if you

believe something it's practically

delusion because belief

is the idea that you know something that

you don't really know

so

belief

um i mean just

concepts are not really not going to

encapsulate reality they're not going to

contain reality other than just the

underlying reality of the consciousness

of just underlying the belief

but um perception is samsara

so i mean

if you wanted to really be a buddhist

that didn't believe in rebirth i mean

you shouldn't

disbelieve in rebirth either because the

article waga which is as i say is very

ancient very archaic

um it says don't believe anything so if

you disbelieve in rebirth that's just a

belief in non-rebirth it's still a

positive belief just couched in negative

terms

um so then then the onus would be on the

person who's saying that uh you know all

the other stuff added on

where where it is talking about rebirth

and so forth is uh just later editions
you know that cropped up during the
first hundred years or so of uh buddhism
as uh

as a as a religion or as a philosophical
or spiritual system

so

yeah i think

if you are a buddhist and you don't
believe in rebirth

then i mean you shouldn't believe in
anything then you'll be following what
the atakawaga teaches anyway

but if you're

believing this and that i mean you're
just picking and choosing the parts you
want to believe and you should have a

really good reason for rejecting
something like abhidhammapitika there's
a list of reasons i've written down
elsewhere why
it's unlikely that the buddha himself
taught abhidharma even though it's the
third pitika of the three pitikas you
know it's the third part of the pali
tripitaka the scriptures of theravada
buddhism but still
there is quite a lot of
persuasive evidence that the buddha
didn't teach abhidhamma personally it's
sort of like a commentary that got
canonized like around the third council
so that would be uh at least a couple

hundred years after the time of the
buddha

so

yeah let's see i i feel as i should go
back to this question i sometimes i kind
of answer at length until i've forgotten
the exact question here

could you explain if there's some kind
of edgy [__] posting no i don't think so
or are there some buddhists who question
the idea of rebirth yeah obviously like
steven batchelor would be one of the
more famous ones by all rights if you
don't believe in rebirth and the vast
majority of buddhist teachings are
automatically invalid for that
individual well the vast majority of the

teachings of the pali canon would be
yeah and the buddha himself in really
ancient texts

does

mention rebirth like um the second suta
of the of the deegan kaya which is just
the second suta of the polytechnics you
know the second discourse of all the
buddhist scriptures

is uh the samanya palasuta where the
buddha is

telling king ajata satu the the fruits
of living a monastic life or the life of
a renuncian

and he goes in ascending order
and up towards the top

there's the psychic powers that can be
cultivated including
memory of one's past lives
and

um ajahn brahmali in in the debate of
traditionalism versus secularism was he
of course being the traditionalist was
really pounding away at the whole idea
of rebirth how you know that's really
the point of of becoming enlightened is
ending rebirth

and he's saying that you don't fully
understand rebirth until you become
enlightened and then it just
becomes clear it's like the turning on
of the light
or the lighting of a lamp i should say

so

yeah i mean if you don't believe in
rebirth you don't believe in karma you
don't believe in
independent coal rising or whatever i
mean nobody's forcing you to be a
buddhist just believe what you want to
believe but you should be careful about
calling yourself a buddhist while at the
same time believing in some cases maybe
the exact opposite of dhamma and there
is a lot of that in the west lately
because
cultural marxism or emancipatory
politics or progressivism or whatever
you want to call it is infiltrating

pretty much all of the liberal leaning
religious systems and turning it all
into

you know like black lives matter and
global warming and gay pride

and this sort of thing to the point that
like modern leftist

uh unitarianism modern leftist methodism
and modern leftist terra vada

in the west

resemble each other more than they

resemble the original versions of those
three systems

so

yeah

so i'll just move on to the next
question

this is also from rob dhamma farmer who
has many questions which is good i'm not
complaining

and he says was the noble eightfold path
primarily aimed at laypeople rather than
monks i don't think so because early

buddhism was aimed primarily in monks

i mean the buddha tossed a bone to the
lay people sometimes

five precepts a few a few sutas

um discussing you know the

the duties of a good buddhist lay person
and so forth but

almost all sutas are directed towards
monks

including um

the first mention of the noble eightfold path in fact uh if i'm not mistaken i might just uh make a fool of myself here but if i'm not mistaken the uh dhamma chaka pachana suta which is considered to be the buddha's first formal discourse after his enlightenment at least according to tradition um it mentions the four noble truths so the noble eightfold path is uh the elaborated version of the fourth noble truth so um yeah i mean it's buddhism was originally primarily aimed at monks so the eightfold path was

um

may have been

devised by monks it may have been that

originally there was just a path there

is a way and then it got systematized

and you know complicated and uh turned

into the eightfold path there are a few

pseudos that mention a tenfold path

which can be used as uh

a bit of evidence that um you know it it

was sort of in a

state of evolution before they settled

on these eight

so and there and there are certain

variations of the eightfold path also

like um it's kind of a seven-fold path

all of which culminate in

you know right right uh jhana right

meditation

so yeah i guess the easy answer to that

question is uh was the noble eightfold

path primarily people no i don't think

so so the next question from rob dhamma

farmer can the non-renunciant spiritual

loner make progress

uh yeah anybody can make progress i mean

even

you know somebody's like uh they got

lots of bad habits

even though they're a non-renunciant uh

layperson

um

just you know cleaning up your act

you know maybe you start watching jordan
peterson videos and and he just you know
inspires you to to uh clean your room
and all that

uh take more responsibility for your own
self your own successes and failures and
all that then uh yeah and some people
can uh make progress just accidentally
you know you have somebody you know
there's a selfish person that very
superficial and so forth and then they
get cancer maybe they almost die in a
car wreck you know somebody close to
them dies and that can just really get
them thinking about you know i'm not
going to live forever and i shouldn't

waste this life

and then they can really make progress

so yeah anybody can make progress

it's just that being a monk was designed

originally

as a way of

facilitating making progress because

you're dedicating your life to making

progress you're not dedicating your life

to making money and so forth with the

making progress part being sort of

around the edges of all this necessary

bill paying stuff you got to do

so

yeah i mean that's an emphatic yes

definitely the non-renunciant spiritual

learner can make progress i mean i made

progress before i became a monk to the point that i was really inspired to become a monk just because i wanted to make more progress

but

um

yeah so the answer is yeah so i'll just move on to

uh rob dama farmer's last question here and he's saying i'm sure you will be identified

for supervisory qualities at the job soon enough he's referring to my job at the sheet metal shop he's being very complimentary

hypothetically if you landed a position

in which man management was required
then what orthodox tarifyan qualities or
teachings would you apply to your daily
role as a leader i am taking notes as i
have to manage people daily but never
considered them to be

much leadership dhamma teachings

other than the qualities of kings etc

thanks again rob

well

equanimity is good i mean if you're

frazzled under stress it's going to make

you less of a good manager than if you

keep your head under stress you know

things

you know the [__] hits the fan at work

and you just you know keep your calm and

and get to solving things instead of you
know just getting sucked into it and you
know yelling or whatever then yeah i
mean that would that would help you just
the cultivation of equanimity
um honesty obviously you know if if you
live a you know you're like an
upstanding more or less virtuous person
you're the people that are working for
you will
you know unless they're totally
insensitive will pick up on that and
have more respect for you be more
willing
to
do what you ask especially if they are

confident that you're going to have them
doing something that isn't wrong

so

yeah i mean it's like any kind of leader
um if he's got the respect of the people
that he's leading he's gonna do a better
job as a general rule than people that
just consider him to be just a jerk

and there are a lot of leaders like that
a lot of jerks that are leaders i'm
fortunate not to have jerks as my
leaders at work

in fact one reason why my job is as
um i don't know why why the business is
as in as good of of a situation as it is
is that the the owner of the business is
an evangelical christian who takes

certain virtues including not swindling
customers very seriously and um just
yesterday i had a customer i was loading
stuff onto his his vehicle with a
forklift
and um
he said that uh you know some some
places you go to
you just feel unwelcome but here i feel
like everyone cares
and that was nice
and um yeah people think that uh you
know you've got compassion and honesty
and and so forth and you know it's just
it's not something that
in specific that you're cultivating it's

just that uh

just through practicing dhamma and just generally cultivating yourself trying to make spiritual progress it's gonna it's gonna rub off on other people

so

and just try to be fair obviously

so i don't know how well i answer that because i'm really not a manager i was the abbot of a monastery for a while but um

i don't know i think um being a warehouse manager or something might be a little different

but there would be some overlap i guess so the next question is from the arya swasti project

and the arya swasti project says

greetings ponyo in hinduism as you

probably know

recognize yugas or age of time does

buddhism recognize something like this

and would you say that we are in a kali

yuga or some other factor of time much

respect sadhu well yeah buddhism has

adopted the ancient indian you know

cycles

and um so there are yugas

um

whether we are in the kali yuga or not

as questionable some people just you

know have no doubt we've got to be in

the kali yuga or an age of spiritual

darkness and so forth but i'm pretty well acquainted with history and i don't think things are really all that awful i mean people aren't very religious in the west

but still i mean you've got fewer psychopathic kings and emperors and fewer cannibals and and you know fewer uh the quite infested forests where you know you gotta have you know soldiers accompany you in order to keep you from being killed and robbed or whatever

um

but the the main thing for me is according to buddhism when you're in like the golden age people live

astronomically long lives and it's all
justice you've got like the chakravartin
the the wheel turning monarch who rules
the world in peace and virtue and then
things gradually get worse and worse
after that and accompanying the things
getting worse and worse spiritually
the the lifespan
gets shorter and shorter until you're
down to like
i think it's like 14 years seven years
something like that people start
cannibalizing each other things get
really awful and of course
um you know that's not happening now
in fact i would say over the past few

hundred years

um the average lifespan has been

increasing instead of decreasing so it

could be

that these ages i mean they're not just

a uniform decline it could be like you

go down like this and then you got like

a little upsurge sort of like

global warming is supposed to be doing

or something you know it's it's going a

certain direction you got a little jog

and then it goes the other way and then

let it jog it could be that we're in a

jog i don't know

and the kitty is uh

being very

very friendly or bored or something

let's see in hinduism i'll just read the
question again this i want to make sure
that i get this

in hinduism as you probably know

recognize yuga's or age of time does

buddhism recognize something i said yes

yes and would you say that we are in a

kali yuga um i really don't think so

i don't i mean from the hindu point of

view yeah because everyone says so but

in the buddhist point of view um

i mean spiritually maybe we're doing

worse although it's hard to say

how well-off spiritually like

a medieval european peasant was

you know they had their catholicism they

believed it without question but were
they

happier or wiser or better off than us
is hard to say because you can't really
get into their mind other than maybe
read some of the stuff that they wrote
and it was only the really educated
people that were writing stuff
because the uneducated people didn't
know how

so yeah i thought about this before
just going with the buddhist description
of the decline
into

like the worst of the the kali yuga
i don't think we're even close to that
yet so we got something to look forward

to and i'll just move on to the next
question this is from

chakra gosha

and chakra ghosha says

in the zen there is a tradition of
chanting the ancestral line starting
from weepassi buddha

and the other six predecessor buddhas

and then listing the chain of teachers

and students by name from gautama buddha

to mahakasipah to ananda and so forth up

until the present is there a comparable

tradition of maintaining such a list in

taravana

if not a complete list

how far back can a typical terabot monk

trace his ordination line

um

well this is sort of like a two-part

question first you've got like the the

buddhist before gotama buddha

and um there is a text in the pali

topedica called the the buddha one song

which i'm pretty sure covers the 28

buddhas

you know it's 27 before gotama i think

the gotama buddha was 28th in this

universal cycle and then there's going

to be matea after that

and if you read the buddha ghost if you

read the buddha warm song you'll see

that i mean it's just unbelievable to a

westerner some of the some of the

stories

like um

mangala buddha look up the story of

mangala buddha sometime

it was um it was it's very strange i

mean it's just like monty python realm

so weird

and so asian people can accept it

without question

um

westerners generally cannot unless

they're just the type that's very faith

oriented

and are willing to just accept what they

are told from you know a revered teacher

or whatever

um

and really you can't say that there is a
chain

of these buddhas because

i mean there's no lineage there's no

succession because buddhism or dhamma

has to completely die out before the

next buddha arises and he rediscovers it

so it's not like a transmission from one

buddhist next

it's just that

um you know buddha dies out it's

discovered rediscovered by a buddha and

then it dies out and then it's

rediscovered by another buddha and then

it dies out and so forth

with regard to the patriarchs yeah i

there really isn't

a lineage of patriarchs like there is in

zen

you know you've got i i can't remember

the number of indian patriarchs then you

have the six chinese patriarchs

um

and then uh who knows i mean it may be

that chinese or or zen monks in general

or mahayana monks may have like a more

elaborate lineage you know it's like the

tibetan monks will trace their lineages

back to

nagarjuna or padma sambhava or something

with regard to my tradition

i mean

i was ordained in the tom pulu tradition
tom pulu

was um he learned his meditation
technique from

uh it was uh miguel in seattle

i don't even remember the his uh polly
name

but uh that's about as far back i mean
you could you could research it and go
back maybe a few more teachers beyond
that

or like like goenka i mean most going to
teachers or most goenka meditators know
that that goenko was a disciple of uba
kin uba king which is a disciple of some
monk whose name i don't remember they
probably know it and he was a disciple

of leddy seattle who was a great scholar
seattle back about 100 years ago
and um who let they might know who leddy
seattle was a disciple of and maybe two
or three beyond that tops
and other than that it's going to be
mythology and just uh guesses and so
forth
so
yeah it's it does exist but it's not
nearly as important as in some other
traditions
and um
yeah there's like the entire lineage
um may have been broken for all we know
like uh in sri lanka the sri lankan

lineage was the sangha was pretty much
invalid because so many monks were para
ajika or
raising families or getting married and
so forth so they weren't really monks
and any ordination that they performed
would be invalid and it was like that so
that
they had to send for real
valid monks from from burma and thailand
to get the sangha going again
in sri lanka so
um you don't know if that sort of thing
has happened like late ancient times
early medieval times
um you know it's just it's all lost
to uh

lost in antiquity

so um

i guess i guess i answered that one

how far back can a typical terrapod

trace his ordination line well he knows

what tradition he was in if

his teacher was a disciple of

another teacher within the same

tradition usually you know all the

lineage within your own tradition

back to the founder and you may know who

the teacher of your founder was and

maybe the founders teachers teacher but

then it generally just gets obscured and

lost

so the next question is from chaplin

and this one is similar to one that i
already answered so i may answer this
one in a somewhat abbreviated form
but chaplin says what is up with the
western buddhists in the comments
section of your last youtube video
declaring that the buddha never taught
about reincarnation in slavery didn't
exist in india
but was european
slavery i think chaplain means here it
is true that these western self-declared
buddhists do believe in everything that
buddhism is not
do you see any way any help or way
forward into the land of authentic
teachings for this these misguided plebs

um

well some of them may see the light i
mean if you practice you're going to get
wiser i mean that's the purpose of
dhamma practice it can be said that that
is the purpose of dhamma practice is to
cultivate wisdom

and so you may have foolish reasons for
meditating at first

you know you want psychic powers so you
can impress that that girl in history
class or whatever

but then if you practice correctly at
least

even though you have

sort of questionable motives at first

then you're going to make progress and
then your your motives will get wiser so
i mean that that's possible

um yeah getting back to the western
buddhists i'm not sure that the one that
was talking about slavery was even a
buddhist he was just kind of uh one of
those western

um authorities on buddhism

um

yeah he was saying that there was there
was no slavery in ancient india and
saying that there was no word for slave
in pali which was dasa
and um now he was saying no dasa was in
reference to

some like the the aboriginal ethnic and

ethnicity of the people living in

northwestern india

or at least a a aboriginal and

aboriginal ethnicity

and um

and i i just pointed out in a in a blog

post responding to this that uh you know

the english word slave

uh is pretty much the same as the pali

word dasa that slave is derived from the

word slav

that slave and slav are etymologically

the same word because the slobs were

enslaved so much in like early medieval

times you know they were subjugated

people that were sold as slaves

that they just became almost synonymous
and that's the way dasa was
like the rig veda talks about the dasa
or the dossier as these little brown
snub-nosed people that were being
conquered by by the vedic speak vedic
sanskrit speaking indo-aryans
um

and so dasa just came to me enslaved
just like arya came to me noble or like
the ruling class

okay and then with regard to
the buddha never teaching reincarnation
i have no idea how this person came up
with that one because it's just
throughout the polytechs it must be like
a lot of western buddhists who are

willing to believe that the buddha was
enlightened or at least very wise so
that anything in the text that they
don't like has to be fake it has to be
added by by later monks you know it's
just corruption of buddhism because
obviously

the the enlightened buddha would be
teaching you know what western leftists
are saying now

it's it's that kind of mentality as far
as i can tell at least with regard to a
lot of them

and so

yeah i mean

some people are so superficial and so

selective in their buddhism that they
may not make very much progress at all
and so

um

oh well

i mean it's it's probably been this way
for a long time

like um i read some

chronicle of um

or not necessarily a chronicle it was
one of those chinese mahayana monks a
chinese buddhist monk who came to india
to find

books of monastic discipline that he can
take back to china for the benefit of
the chinese buddhists

and

he claimed that at near
budgaya there was a monastery
dedicated to all the buddhas except
gotama and they were their lineage was
started by devadatta who was like the
buddhist judas iscariot

so

i mean there's been these kind of
distortions and heresies in buddhism for
a very long time

um

so i mean it's just something you have
to contend with and going with um
traditional buddhism

a lot of these people are just going to
go to hell like there was one person i

shouldn't even mention his name he was actually he wrote an essay accusing maha kaspā who was the buddhist chief disciple at the time of the buddha's death or paranibāna he was accusing mahākaspā of murdering the buddha and

i mean accusing an enlightened being assuming that makassar was enlightened and he was considered to be a fully enlightened arahant by tradition just accusing him based on just the flimsiest evidence of being a murderer i mean

if if you can believe what the texts say then that kind of attitude really can lead to uh some serious bad karma

anyway

getting back to uh chaplin's

questions here the second question

how are your whippets doing

and for those of you who are not uh

studied in dog breeds a whippet is sort

of like a

a small greyhound and we've got two of

them here

and um one of them is doing really fine

and the other one is in heat and so she

has to stay

outside or in a in a big kennel

kind of a cage thing

because otherwise she's going to be

dripping

uh blood

or whatever whatever that substance is

that drips out of [_] and heat

onto on the floors and the furniture and

so forth so she's been unhappy lately

but um

saffy is like a little princess and

she's the only dog

lately that's been getting full run of

the house

i would like to have

um my dog genghis

uh come inside sometimes but uh he's

kind of a spaz and uh

my sweetheart doesn't trust his behavior

well enough to uh

be confident that she's not gonna have

to be cleaning up exasperating masses
but um genghis is not a whippet so maybe
i'm just throwing that in just just
uh what do you call it
i can't remember what it's called when
you just sort of mention somebody's name
not name dropping but uh
you know shout out that's what it is i'm
giving my dog genghis a shout out
and he's uh half pug and half boston
terriers like this little cannonball
okay so anyway the next question
is from bpat427
and bpat427 says
i know you said you're not a fan of
black metal but are you familiar with

power metal at all granted it's pretty
cheesy but very uplifting and empowering
huh yeah i've never even heard of it
until i got this question it's like
black metal with cheese
something like that
yeah i don't know
it's uh if it's very uplifting and
empowering that's that's good i mean i
listen to lots of different kinds of
music i might like power metal for all i
know but um
i've never heard of it before so i'll
just move on to the next question which
is similar in a certain respect
this is also from bpat427 what's your
opinion on roman von ungern sternberg

and i think

i have this vague recollection of having
heard that name before probably some
very brief account of roman von unger
and sternberg he may have been some
westerner who

just went into like uh an asian country
and sort of set himself up like the man
who would be king or something

but yeah i i don't know who it is really
i'm just guessing

so my opinion on roman von unger and
sternberg is i hope he was a nice guy

next question from bp427 would you ever
consume a psychedelic drug at this point
in your life oh what a naughty question

as it turns out i did consume one just a
few weeks ago

and uh

i'm thinking there's a good chance i may
consume

such a substance again such an entheogen
um

within the next few weeks

so

yeah i would i would ever can i would uh

i would definitely consider it yeah

yeah definitely and i have uh a few

times

since i stopped being a monk

yeah i don't know what i'm allowed to

say

so yeah

let's see but i mean before i became a
monk

taking

like psychedelics

was pretty much my spiritual practice at
least at the practical level you could
say that

um at the theoretical level you know i'd
be reading books and so forth

um just coming up with my own theories

but as an actual practice a spiritual
practice i sucked at meditation you know
just be it would be a a real feat just
to sit still for half an hour when i
first started out

and um so like one of the best spiritual

practices i had was just go out into a wilderness by myself usually and uh you know take a couple hits of acid or something and

commune with nature run around naked maybe do a little fire sacrifice to the gods

um

yeah i mean it's a consciousness

expanding experience i think most of the monks of my generation

including me when i was a monk started off with psychedelics and then

it's like you experience

expanded states of consciousness

and it really throws into doubt the

validity of your normal waking state

because you realize that this is just as
valid at least as valid as my normal
waking state

certain aspects you know it's like a
mystical state most of the times that i
have taken psychedelics i have had
real religious experiences and mystical
experiences

and so

um

in a way it kind of helps you to
triangulate

you know it's like you've got more than
one way of looking at reality
and

so monks would or

people before they became monks would
would start with psychedelics and then
they would try to find some way of
cultivating those same states of
expanded consciousness

without the use of the chemical
but

um

it's it's taking the substance as a
general rule

is more reliable

it may not be quite as wholesome but

it's more reliable because you take the
the little tab of paper or whatever

and you've got a pretty good idea that

there's going to be something happening

whereas with meditation some people just

naturally suck at meditation they're
just not very good at it and it may take
years

of really strenuous effort to get to the
same level of expanded consciousness
that you could get just from taking one
or two hits of acid or whatever it may
happen to be ayahuasca or something
so yes maybe tmi is a long answer to a
short question

so i'll just move on to the next
question which is the last question not
only from bpat427 but from everybody
this evening and as you can see it's
night time now
and i've got bugs attracted to the

lights crawling on me

and okay so the last question here is
you've previously described loving a
partner as poking a hole through pink
floyd's wall

could you elaborate on the meaning of
that i've never listened to the album
the wall or watched the movie

so it kind of goes over my head

is the wall of the ego's protection
mechanism well bpap427 has just

insinuated that he's uh a youngster

i mean it's just amazing to me it's like
more than 10 years ago i was talking to
this guy in his 20s and i just happened
to mention that there was some burmese
villagers that would make jethro and

ellie mae look like sophisticated city
slickers by comparison and he didn't
know who i was talking about
he didn't know who jethro and elliott
may were so then i asked him just kind
of you know i'm kind of alarmed at this
point asked him if he knows who gilligan
is and yeah he never heard of gilligan
strange
so pink floyd's wall
um it was
arguably
pink floyd's greatest album
an opinion of most it's not my favorite
album i prefer wish you were here but
um it's a story it's a two album

set

telling the story about

um starting with childhood

and it's just this person due to just

the [_] upness of the adults around

him and as he becomes an adult the

[_] upness of the adults fellow

adults around him that are just

causing him to build this wall around

his heart he's completely closed off and

alienated you know he's got this wall

around his heart to protect his heart

but of course you know it it locks his

heart in as well as locking all the the

possible dangers out

you know all the people trying to hurt

his feelings or you know trying to get

him attached to them so that they can
break his heart or whatever

so

yeah it's like all in all it's just
another brick in the walls like every
everything that happens to you and
especially in case of some people it's
just adding another brick to this wall
you've got this defensive wall around
you that also makes you a like a
prisoner

and

so when you're loving a person if you
sincerely love someone you make yourself
vulnerable to them you have to make you
don't necessarily poke a hole but you

make an opening in pink floyd's wall
everyone everyone you know except for
like a
full genuine saint
is going to have you know some kind of
protective wall in my case
i think i was blessed
um
in that
throughout most of my life my heart was
sort of like a dehydrated apple
and so it didn't get hurt easily
you know it's like a little picket fence
would be plenty
of protection from my heart and you know
i didn't need brick walls or or bunkers
or anything

um

so yeah i'm i've been much more willing
to take risks

and um

much more willing to make myself
vulnerable just because

i don't get hurt as easily maybe or
maybe it's just unlike an aesthetic
thing in me where i'm just willing to
get hurt occasionally if i think it's
worthwhile if i think it's worth it

so i guess that's that was uh

a blessing for me i mean the

the heart like a dehydrated apple maybe
is not so great but um

i've been working on that that's been

one of my main

uh my main avenues of progress in this
life is cultivating compassion and love
for my fellow human

because for most of my life i love trees
more than i love the average human being
and um but i seem to be digressing here
so i mean when you love somebody you're
in a way you're

you're breaking down the division
between self and other you know it you
just become an us

it may be that two people

like let's say there's two delinquents
that just madly fall in love with each
other you know they might break down the
wall between themselves but they still

got the the double the wall around both
of them or something
and um but still i mean
just to be completely closed off and
alienated is is not a good way to live
your life and a saint would have no
sense of self they would have no purpose
for a wall so like a fully enlightened
being i assume has no
no alienating self
defensive
fortification around his heart
but um the average person maybe can't go
that far
so at the very least you you break down
that wall

towards one other person

and um you know that's healthy because
to that extent you're breaking down the
your

your alienation you're just your concept
of i me mine you know there's a there's
an us factor involved

so

yeah i've never watched the movie either
as

it's considered to be a great movie like
roger ebert

the great the god king roger ebert had
it on his list of the greatest movies of
all time in his opinion

but it just seems so dark and depressing
and

just i don't know it was pink floyd in
general

is dark and depressing

and that's one reason why i liked um or
why i do like wish you were here because

it was one of the few albums that was
inspired by something uplifting

you know there was the it was the whole
album as far as i can tell was dedicated
to sid barrett who took too much acid
and uh

fried his brain or something he just
kind of went off the end and

he had to leave the group and it was
like dedicated to him just out of

you know camaraderie or friendship or

something

so yeah i mean if getting back to the question above i mean psychedelic drugs i mean definitely there should be some moderation involved you know it should be used medicinally and not not so much recreationally but uh you know you should use it with the right right intentions of uh

at the very least blowing carbon out of your pipes you know it'll knock you out of rods

but pink floyd's wall yeah um i'm sure you can listen to it on youtube if you're really curious but um again the whole the whole story of pink floyd's wall is just the

lifelong process

of just building this defensive

fortification around one's heart

to protect one's heart from being hurt

but at the very same time you just

become

alienated and um

yeah love is uh a very good therapy to

cure you a map

and that is the last question so uh i

guess we're all done

and uh i hope the exposure of this uh

camera

will

will be sufficient that uh

the uh

the optics here are not completely
messed up

and um

i'd say that if you have any questions
you're very welcome to ask and remember
there are no stupid questions

um and just ask them below if if you
please or if you have access to the
discord server you can ask there or if
you're on subscribe star which a few of
you may be

you can you can ask your questions there
also

and um

be happy

oh and buy my books if you haven't
already is also in the down below

and be happy

hello and welcome to episode 28 of
question and answer and i am your host
and question answerer panel bossa
and it's just kind of amazing to me that
we're we've done 28 of these or i've
done 28 of them anyway
and
if you average like 18 questions
per
episode which is probably a very
conservative estimate then
i've by the end of this episode i will
have answered more than 500 questions
which is kind of a lot of questions
although sometimes i do repeat myself
and answer the same sort of question

more than once but

still

sweet tea i'm living in the south

so i'll just wade into this and the

first question is from saul invictus

and saul invictus says

i am curious about where do you lean in

philosophy of mind i have two of your

books and i don't seem to grasp where

you belong are you a property dualist

cosmo psychist menistic idealist

pan psychist

naturalist or maybe something entirely

different

well that's kind of an interesting

question it's like a western philosophy

question which is uh kind of nice

although to tell you the truth i haven't
really

categorized my uh philosophy of mind
um

i don't think philosophy of mind is the
same as epistemology is it i think
that's philosophy of knowledge or
something

um but i've i've discussed my philosophy
before

um just the the basic can be explained
uh

you know through the simile of the block
of marble which which i've explained
several times if not many times
and

so you've got

ultimate reality

can be compared to just like this block

of marble just out in the middle of a

barren plane there's nothing to compare

it with so it doesn't you can't really

say what size it is because there's

really nothing to compare it with

you might as well say that it's sizeless

and within that block of marble is every

possible statue in fact there's like

impossible statues in there too you know

like uh a statue of someone with uh

with legs as thin as hairs that wouldn't

really stand up in reality or you can

have moving statues and so forth in that

block of marble

every single atom

is already there

you know it's just it all you have to do

is remove the excess rock and and the

statue is already in there and

i would say the universe works that way

um

you've got just

infinite formless energy or

consciousness

which

theists would call god

but because it is infinite and formless

it becomes paradoxical because it's it's

sizeless i mean you can't say whether it

exists or doesn't exist because it just

transcends the duality of existence or
non-existence

but every single possible

statute every single possible

manifestation of energy is contained

within that infinite

energy and uh

so you've got

some of these statues become

complicated enough that they become

self-aware

and that would be us

we are

virtual statues contained within this

infinity

that have become

uh recursive self-aware and then we

become essentially deluded and thinking
that we're separate from the rest of it
so um maybe that would make me a
monistic idealist
of this list here i'm not sure what a
cosmo psychist is
um i'm certainly not a dualist
pan psychist
yeah i'm not a
a naturalist except just uh at the
superficial level of explaining samsara
yeah i mean
i have a degree in biology
so um i do have some uh
use for scientific empiricism as a way
of explaining

this

um virtual

conditional world that we're living in

so

yeah i guess i guess that's me

um it's it's really it's it's

complicated to say i mean human language

is not designed to really talk about

reality

so i might as well throw in that uh

almost the only thing that hegel ever

wrote or said that i have any use for

is his idea

and with which he starts his dialectic

and his logic and that is he starts with

pure being

which would be kind of like

god or brahman of the hindus or dao

something like that

that's that's the thesis that's the

first thesis of the dialectic and of

course

uh hegelian dialectic then has the

antithesis

and the antithesis is pure non-being

so

he points out that pure being and pure

non-being are completely devoid of any

distinct determinate content so they

just kind of blend into each other

they're really indistinguishable and

then throughout the rest of his logic he

just takes that as a given

that pure being and pure non-being are
synonymous

so absolutely everything and absolutely
nothing

you can't really tell them apart

and so that kind of explains

how the universe comes into being or at
least seems to because uh

um

this everything is nothing

i don't know i'm just kind of

uh kind of wallowing in uh or straying

off into nonsense here so um

yeah sol invictus i mean you apparently

know more about the meanings of these

categories than i do

so uh

you can

figure it out for yourself but i'm

certainly not a materialist i do not

believe that physical matter is

ultimately real

so there is that

and i do have

a rather philosophical interpretation of

dependent core rising or

pedigree in in buddhism

where

it's like

all these conditions nothing has a

distinct self

entity

you know there is no self entity that's

largely what um

the the buddhist teaching of no self

is about or it can be interpreted that

way

that um everything exists because it's

conditioned by other things

and all these other things are also

likewise conditioned by other things and

so you've got this virtual reality

that's just sort of self-conditioning

and there's an infinite number of those

and uh the ultimate essence or substance

um

you can call it mind consciousness

i do think that the universe itself is

uh

conscious in a way that even a hydrogen

atom may have some

this

tiny elemental spark of consciousness to

it it just can't think of course

it doesn't really cognize anything

but what a physicist calls energy

is really just a very simple elemental

form of what a psychologist calls

consciousness

and what a psychologist calls

consciousness

is just a very complicated organized

form of what a physicist would call

energy

so i guess i'm some kind of idealist

so let's just move on to the next

question here

before

everyone gets so confused they just turn
off the uh the video

and the next question is from matthew
and matthew says

it seems that the purpose of religious
vocational behavioral constraints such
as the winnea

or rule of saint benedict is to impose
external discipline in order to foster
the growth of a more natural

form of inner discipline

please be so kind as to offer a
reflection

well

i remember uh

a wise old monk burmese monk seattle

uzodika mohammed uzodika who's known as

ujyotika in the west

said that the purpose of winia

buddhist monastic discipline

is to cause the

the life of a monk to be simple and

blameless

and i think that's about right i really

can't say with regard to the rule of

saint benedict i've never really studied

catholic monastic discipline

but with regard to buddhist monastic

discipline

it simplifies your life

and

and also just

with regard to society

it makes the behavior of monks blameless

or at least it did in ancient india

nowadays a monk

acting blamelessly in accordance with

the customs of ancient india might be

blamed sometimes in the modern or

postmodern west like a monk that won't

touch women

might really offend feminists for

example

um

so

yeah

in a way it helps with regard to

spiritual development

by

first of all

you're you're not

indulging

in immoral behavior

so it it's you've got less

like uh

pushback from the universe

or uh you know like

karmic uh retribution getting in the way

and makes things very simple so that

your mind is clear you don't have a

guilty conscience so much because you're

not

wallowing in immorality so it just makes

your mind clear and simple and then it

makes it easier to practice dhamma and
make progress

and you don't have angry mobs with
torches and pitchforks

besieging the monastery

so i think that's that's the main
purpose of it

okay

the next question also from matthew

since returning to normal life has the
sudden removal of enforced behavioral

discipline caused a decrease in your
ability to maintain equanimity

has increasing the difficulty setting of
your life

increased or expanded your skillfulness

in the application of dhamma or have you

found the grind of daily life to be
eating away at some of your previously
developed skillfulness my sincere
apologies if this question is too
personal

well those of you familiar with uh
these uh videos and my blog for that
matter now that uh there's pretty much
nothing that's too personal

i i've gotten into trouble for uh
just the whole tmi thing
so let's just wade into this

um

the sudden removal of enforced
behavioral discipline

uh

yeah

to some degree i mean

just

being

constrained is like a pressure cooker

you know like having your life

completely regulated like anyone who's

been to a lot of meditation retreats

know that somebody who's put into this

practical sensory deprivation maybe

they're moving in slow motion you know

eating in slow motion walking in slow

motion getting minimal sleep and so

forth they can some people just crack up

so i mean it can just really i mean it's

like a [__] accelerator to some degree

brings up neurotic stuff that kind of a

thing so

um

living the life of a monk doesn't
necessarily result in just blissful
clarity

and so living a more natural life
actually
can cause

fewer explosions

or maybe not explosions but um

less turmoil to some degree

if you're if you're skillful at the way
you go about things

um

but i mean when you're living in the
world there are more distractions you

know it's it is harder to be mindful
when you know you've got a job to do and
you've got people interacting with you
and most of those people are not really
um you know they're not dhamma
practitioners
and uh for one thing uh just driving a
car
south carolina especially is where i
live
um they've got some of the worst drivers
in america apparently um there's even
some uh empirical data to support that
with regard to insurance
statistics and so forth and really it's
like half the people in town do not use
turn signals it seems like

and

some people just drive like idiots

and um i occasionally drive like an
idiot

and so just having somebody almost
smash into your car

can uh cause cuss words to flow

from from the oral cavity this kind of a
thing

so

yeah just living in the world and

interacting with other people

it is more difficulty

or it is more difficult and um

yeah equanimity is uh

it's kind of strange it's like there's

different levels of equanimity different
kinds of equanimity like for example
i've i've told people i told like a monk
who was a mahasi arya once that uh i've
i've just thrown conniptions mindfully
where

um

like for example one time i was in my
cave in burma and it was just so hot
just you i could not be comfortable you
know you'd wake up at four in the
morning and sweating and you knew what
it was gonna be like at two in the
afternoon

and uh just the the chronic heat
just started really getting to me and
one time i was just

just cussing and slamming things
and um it was like something clicked
and
i was so used to being mindful
that it was just like a part of me was
cussing and slamming things but there
was this deeper part of me you know
deeper down that was just watching the
whole thing it was sort of like being an
actor playing the role of somebody
throwing a connection
and when you've had experiences like
that one
really strong impression that you get is
that deeper part's always there
so you can be just completely flipping

out or whatever

not that i am in the habit of completely

flipping out

but there's always this stillness

you know there's just like this passive

disinterested disinterested observer going

that's always there

um

another example of that was uh my father

was a

hardcore alcoholic for many years

he was he was a rare kind of alcoholic

in the west but it's fairly common

in the in like russia or eastern europe

where he would just drink a fifth of

vodka pretty much every day and you

never really saw him drunk and you never

really saw him sober he was just kind of
fueled on alcohol

and um

as was his his way

one fine day he decided to just cold
turkey

and just stop drinking

and

um he went to the dts because he was

really an alcoholic and he was just

raging and just like tearing at his hair

and peeing his pants and

um

then he was he was hallucinating also

and at one point he was he hallucinated

this big eye on the wall just watching

you know there's like this eye on the
wall watching everything that's going on
and he knew that that was like an aspect
of himself you know there's like this
deeper level that's just always watching
and once you've i mean when you've had
sufficient experience of that kind of
level of consciousness it it abides you
know it's you have some connection with
that
so that even
if you're
you know in a state of you know whatever
it is turmoil or despair or whatever at
the surface
then i mean deeper down there's always
this

calm observing aspect that you never
really are cut off from

so that kind of

that kind of thing can still happen

let's see

checking the question out here

see have you found the grind of daily

life to be eating away at some of your

previously developed skillfulness well i

mean just the

the simplicity and clarity

is

it's not as much as before

just because the lot my life is not as

simple as it was before

and i have a lot more

personal interaction especially now that
i have a mate
a biological mate
and um yeah i don't regret that at all
that's it's really nice
but
still i mean it's just a whole different
kind of a whole different way of going
about life than just um
silence and austerity living alone in a
cave in the forest
but it's it's uh i mean it's just a
different a different way of going about
things and ultimately
you can say it's neither better nor
worse although a devout orthodox
buddhist would say well of course being

a monk is better

tom it doesn't work for everybody

i think i'm just going to move on to the

next question whether or not

regardless of whether i completely

answered that one

because it's my show

okay matthew asks the next question

which is

have you now answered oh you have now

answered one hundreds of questions from

a western audience what questions are

people not asking that you think they

should be that's an interesting question

that's the first time anyone has

answered asked that one i think

i have now answered hundreds of
questions yeah it's like
about 500
at least
from a western
audience what questions are people not
asking that you think they should well i
mean people should ask whatever they you
know they really want to know
i don't want them to be asking
certain questions that are interesting
to me
just
if it's not interesting to them i mean
if they don't really want to know
so
i don't really have any any complaints

about

what people have been asking i mean some
people

uh

you know they'll be asking the weird pp
poopoo gay but sex questions or whatever
and i mean if they really want to know
that i mean that's fine with me it's
it's all it's all fair game so long as
they're sincere questions

um

i suppose

um

fine points of dhamma you know that's
kind of interesting to me or questions
about like what the original earliest

buddhism was like

that that would be interesting to me and

it would might be interesting to other

people too

so

yeah if you can't think of any question

to ask just ask something along those

lines and uh it's interesting to me so

at least somebody's interested

but all in all yeah i've got no

complaints people have been asking good

questions and that itself was a good

question

so last question from matthew

what is your personal take on the hindu

concept of self where all creation is

essentially one thing

brahman versus the buddhist concept of
no self versus the christian idea that
we humans

are an imperfect reflection of the
divine what do you think is hitting
closer to the mark

well

i must say that like with regard to
metaphysics i don't think that
terrabotta buddhism

comes closest to hitting the mark

because theravada buddhism for whatever
reason

it became materialistic

and so according to tarawatta orthodox
tarawata physical matter is ultimately

real

and just pluralism is valid

and um

yeah i just i just don't see it my

thinking is more mahayanas and always

has been with regard to that

um i think the terrabonds would have

done well to have

paid heed to nagarjuna

um with regard to the hindu concept

for all creation is essentially one

thing well that goes back to the block

of marble doesn't it i was just

mentioning that

and that block of marble could be called

near guna brahman so long as uh

no statues have been singled out

in potential or conditional form

but the thing is

like i also mentioned like hegel was

saying

when you've got something that's

infinite and formless

then uh you can't really say whether it

exists or not

and so it just goes off the scale it's

you can't really talk about it in in any

kind of valid way so going with uh hin

or buddhist logic you know to say that

it exists is invalid to say that it

doesn't exist is invalid to say that it

does and doesn't exist is invalid to say

that it neither does nor does not exist

is invalid

so we have to kind of wallow in delusion

or at least illusion

when talking about this kind of stuff

and um

you have to use dualistic language i

mean language is by its very nature

dualistic at least to some degree

so

um

theists

including the vedantists

go with the error of is

it does exist

and then everything is a manifestation

of that

whereas the buddhists go with the error

of doesn't exist usually at least the
terrabottans do you know they they speak
in terms of you know voidness emptiness
cessation that kind of a thing
and um

i mean each each side has its advantages
at least with regard to buddhism

if you go with the doesn't exist you
know like the
this

um

creation is essentially one thing where
it's all sort of
combined into this one

essence you know the spirit of god or or
whatever you want to call it the dao um

you're reifying it and then you're like
believing in that and it can be an
obstacle

whereas not believing anything
is sort of the earliest most archaic
philosophy of knowledge you know it's
like

it wasn't even really skepticism it was
just you cannot know the truth by
thinking about it and so you just
clear your mind

just make yourself wide awake without
singling out any particular thoughts and
that will bring you closer to reality
um

see but i mean i do have a lot of
respect for like um

shankara you know advaita vedanta that
kind of a thing i mean

you can you can uh

look at the situation from both points
of view and kind of triangulate because
both have their own

merits

see the christians idea that we are an
imperfect reflection of the divine what
were the

statues the virtual statues in the block
of marble

um

but yeah the christian idea like we've
got an immortal soul that
is different from all other immortal

souls and if you're going to go with any kind of self view then

i think the vedantist idea that the the atman or self is brahman or god so everybody is sharing the same soul which is just

that

aspect of the individual

that is ultimately real you know it's like the underlying ultimate reality that uh you know underlies all of the illusion of maya

that is uh you know it's not entirely valid because nothing you can say about it is entirely valid but uh that comes much closer to the mark than saying

um there are an infinite number of
immortal souls that are all different
from each other
and that those immortal souls can change
and so forth
but uh in buddhism they just go with
isn't and uh
no immortal soul and no real essence
even other than just this conditionality
of these you know conditioned conditions
you know each condition that's
conditioning conditioning us for example
is it self-conditioned by all these
other things and it's just this infinite
almost like an infinite regress
of conditions conditioning each other

and causing what seems like a physical
universe or a phenomenal universe

so

yeah we're getting into some weird
metaphysical

waters in this one

so i think i'll just move on to the next
question which is by

toronto nationalist

and toronto nationalist says

are there any good resources like books
or videos about celibacy

or semen retention practices in the
dharma

hmm

well i mean you can find a lot of stuff
about celibacy just in the ancient texts

semen retention practices

i mean

in traditional theravada semen retention

practices simply means that

you don't have sex and you don't

masturbate but still

my experience when i was a younger monk

especially is the semen is not exactly

retained because

periodically you just have like a

pornographic dream

in your sleep

and uh the excess pressure is released

in that way

and that is um

you know there's no offense i mean it's

it's uh it's completely allowable

for

for monks to have wet dreams

and when i got into my 40s i stopped

having them

and i kind of missed them actually

um

but with regard to celibacy semen

retention practices i did have a reader

of my early blog who's really into this

and he actually had a website going just

on the the whole subject of celibacy and

semen retention practices and i'm sure

that if you look on the internet you can

find all kinds of stuff about it but um

to me

i mean celibacy is

or something like that is the less you think about it you know the less you try to organize it and turn it into this system the better it works it's sort of like the fat lady on a diet you know the stereotypical fat lady on a diet who's just she's tried all these diets and she's she's like like struggling to to lose weight and just making a big deal of it and it just kind of perpetuates it you know it's like struggling with it makes it stronger

you know it's getting muscles from all the struggling that she's doing with it and um

that's one reason why um

oftentimes it doesn't work out very well
for the nice fat lady
and it's the same way with with just
about anything including celibacy and
semen retention i mean the more you make
an issue of it
the more
like unstable it can be unless you're
like a catholic medieval catholic saint
who just has this stainless steel faith
that if you
emit semen you're gonna burn in hell or
something you have no doubts at all and
it just drives you to the point of
fanaticism where you're just gonna do it
then yeah maybe that would work but um
it's really hard for modern westerners

to work up that level of just uh

single-minded

wild-eyed fanaticism

or uh faith

we really are not a strongly

faith-oriented people here in

the uh the postmodern west

but um yeah so i mean just do it and uh

don't think about it much

is that's probably the best way of going

about it

um

semen retention practices

yeah also i've i read in a book a long

time ago how uh the chinese were really

into that the taoists

where

a chinese man was supposed to preserve

his yang essence

and he was supposed to

get as much yin essence as possible

which meant

he should have lots of sex

but he should not

emit semen

except for his his wife

for the purpose of making babies and the

rest of the time he should like retain

it just so that his yang essence builds

up and then he gets more yin essence

from the female that balances the yin

and yang

and so that kind of avenue might be uh

worthy of of research i suppose but it
wouldn't really be terrible and buddha
buddhism it wouldn't you know it
wouldn't be

terrible buddhist dhamma it'd be taoism
chinese

um

but in terrible it just says don't do it
and just pretty much leaves it in that
so i'll just move on to the next
question

after telling toronto nationals one more
time i mean just i'm there's lots of
information on that subject on the
internet i am sure

but i've never really been all that much

interested in

you know making

like a an issue of it

you know all my years as a celibate monk

um

yeah maybe i'm maybe i'd be better off

if i if i did but um

it's just the rule says if you

i mean if if a monk has sex

with a male or a female or even an

animal then he's just excommunicated for

life so that would really i was never

even seriously tempted to get myself

excommunicated

but um

just just with regard to uh emitting

semen intentionally that's san gadi cesa

number one which is uh
it's a relatively serious offense
and uh a monk who
emits semen intentionally
commits somehow he says number one has
to do penance for six days and six
nights plus
uh as many
days and nights as he uh didn't confess
it so like you don't confess it for a
week then you've got to do an extra week
of penance and it's really a pain in the
neck and you've got to get go through
this ceremony with 20 at least 20 monks
of in good standing which can be
inconvenient

doing the penance itself can be
inconvenient and just the thought of the
inconvenience of it
um is a pretty good deterrent
from rubbing one out
so to speak

um

so yeah i think i'll just uh move on to
the next question and this is from rob
alias dhamma farmer

and uh rob's first question is
thoughts on alan watts question mark
and really alan watts is apparently a
controversial figure

and um

he was mainly a writer about zen like
back in the 50s and 60s i think and i've

read one book by him at least one just
called zen buddhism

and he's

well written or well i mean he writes
well

well written

yeah he i mean he wrote well i mean it
was it was easy to read

and um

informative

uh he was sort of uh

you know there's a whole crop of

uh buddhist uh

promulgators back then like edward

kansai was another one

who uh did more terra wadden stuff

and um i don't know i i guess he was
like messing around with
girls and stuff and maybe
he uh

you know had like a shady side um
there's uh ken wheeler you know the the
tattooed monkey
live streams

just says alan watts is just flat out
evil but then again he says that uh
trader joe's is evil
so

yeah i i really don't know that much
about onwards i just read that one book
by him and it was you know standard
standard western approach to zen and
kind of nice and you know i've heard a

few of his uh

youtube videos where he's just giving

spiritual advice i guess he was like

some kind of

advisor

um

at like a college or something

so he did have some wisdom he may have

had a shady side though like a lot of

people do have wisdom

had you know i like the bhagwan raj nish

alias osho

you know he had some wisdom too he

definitely had a shady side as well

and there's there's lots of people like

that so maybe on watts was was among

their number

so i'll just move on to uh the next

question from rob alias damma farmer

i've heard a lot of debate on the eyes

open eyes closed position and meditation

does it matter thanks that's that's a

good question

and um i've

i've heard some debate on that also

and um

there there there is some argument in

favor of eyes open

because

um

i have a restless mind by nature

it's um udacha in pali just restlessness

and agitation which is common among

westerners we're just like compulsive
thinkers um a boo a burmese village
farmer

who doesn't think very much he can just
sit down and just go into in relatively
deep samadhi but um

we westerners um we just think a lot
and

having your eyes open
and just like gazing at a
blank wall for example

um it uses up a certain amount of
of mental energy

or like brain energy if you're if you're
into the materialistic explanation
and um so it can like help to calm your

mind just because some of the this
excess energy of your mind
is
being expended
on
the
the process of of seeing
and some kind of meditation you just
have to have your eyes open if you're
doing walking meditation then your eyes
are open or um
doing casino meditation like meditating
upon a colored disc
or meditating upon a decomposing corpse
which you're supposed to do in terribata
but it doesn't happen very much anymore
um

then obviously you have to have your
eyes open for that

in zen you just look at a blank wall

is my understanding but i mean if you
are gonna have your eyes open you should
be

um looking at something blank

something featureless

because if you've got any kind of
patterns or designs then

you're going to be distracted by those
and

you know you're going to be like
counting the squares or whatever

so you know that that patch it looks

like looks kind of like a gargoyle you

know

and um so if you are going to have your eyes open and you're not doing walking meditation or focusing on like a casino disc or something then you should have uh your eyes open towards like a blank wall or something or just having them open in the dark i mean it doesn't really matter all that much if if you're in sitting in darkness whether your eyes are open or closed but um i used to have my eyes closed and then gradually while living in the cave i would uh sit there with my eyes open in fact sometimes in a forest

i would uh do a kind of improvised

casino where

i'd be sitting there looking out at the

forest and they're

just

my eyes would settle upon like a roughly

circular patch of green that was maybe a

different shade from the surrounding

green

and just

focus my

or not even so much focus as just like

you know rest my gaze

at that and it's just sort of a calming

you know

semi-casino i suppose

so yeah if it works for you i mean i
mean the real test is does it work
better for you

you know you just try both ways and find
out what causes your meditation to be
better and then do that that's probably
the best advice i could give

so i'll just move on to the next
question from rob alias dumafarmer
and that is as follows

let's see buddhism aside and being as
you have a theory regarding staring into
the fire was our prehistoric ancestors
meditation

do you believe that if we go that far
back every human was
enlightened

being able to sample the world
completely as it was in nature and not
in civilization possibly created a
people that could truly see the world
from the experiences that we have heard
historically from enlightened beings
since

would this theory have any weight behind
it from your perspective well from my
perspective i consider it very unlikely
for a number of reasons um i did write
an article a long time ago
which is in one of my books
um

trying to come up with
how meditation got invented in the first

place you know sitting in formal
meditation i mean somebody had to invent
it presumably
and i thought one possibility
was that it came from just staring into
a campfire like in the stone age people
would just sit around the campfire and
uh it maybe it's like an animal instinct
in the human animal
to just go into a mild trance state i
mean i certainly do i think pretty much
anybody who sits around a campfire
you know you just sit there and you're
just gazing into the flickering fire and
um
you know you just go into a mild trance
state and it might be it might have had

survival value keep people from
wandering off into the darkness and
getting
snatched by a leopard or something
but it's it's like a
a really mild trance state it's not deep
meditation it's certainly not enough to
get anyone enlightened and in fact i
think
that instinct to
just gaze slack jawed into a campfire
has a lot of people just addicted to
television it's sort of the same
instinct it's a misguided instinct where
we just stare slack jawed into a tv
screen

and

you know just the flickering light just
has us in a mild trance and i doubt that
anybody aside from maybe uh

chauncey gardner in the movie being
there ever became enlightened from uh
from watching tv

i don't know

so

also there's the other aspect of
people like sigmund freud

who believe that any civilized person is
bound to be neurotic but like somebody
living naked in jungle like some savage
living in a state of prime evil

just pray medievalness in a jungle

wouldn't be neurotic and you know there

was like going back to rousseau and the noble savage idea and all that but they weren't aware of the way

hunter-gatherer people actually live and uh they seemed

pretty messed up to me and they've got so many superstitions and taboos that their mind is kind of locked into this really crude belief system in many cases so

yeah from that angle also

uh i consider the people in a pre

well pre-civilization i mean

just going with the old scheme of things

you had like

below civilization full-blown

civilization you had barbarism and below
that you had savagery
and

yeah i don't think that stone age people
who were barbarians at best
really would be

like

noble savages

um

yeah just like

like the myth of the american indians

who just lived in perfect harmony with

their environment and so forth

um

yeah i don't think that there's a lot of
validity to that argument

so you had these stone age people

who would go into a mild trance state
looking into the campfire at night but
um

it really didn't uh
enlighten them
and

although they had fewer distractions
with regard to
just all the stuff that goes on in the
modern world

nevertheless they had all these taboos
and and just

fear-based beliefs they were like
locked into survival mode a lot
and um

yeah i don't think they were necessarily

any more enlightened than we are

i don't really believe in a golden age

either for that matter

so i'll just move on to the next

question

this is also from uh rob alias dhamma

farmer

and this is kind of an interesting one

i've thought about this one a lot

if you cross or wrong an arahant does

that generate more consequential bad

karma than if you crossed or wronged

ignore me and if the above is true

if you have not knowingly wronged the

arahant and karma is volition and mental

states then would the karma and

consequences be lesser

and this is kind of
it's like a paradoxical position of
tarabata buddhism because there are
stories in the texts
of somebody
like there's this story of a guy
who uh he's a rich man and he offers
food to a pajeka buddha so this is
before the time of the buddha you have
this enlightened hermit
he's going for alms
in india and this rich man
puts food into his bowl or he has one of
the servants put food into his bowl and
then after that he regrets it it's like
i should have just given it to the

servants you know this this these
parasites on society you know these
beggars walking around and um
he got huge karma going both ways for
that according to this uh
i don't know if it's in a suta or a
commentary but it is uh definitely
theravada buddhism where he went to
heaven and hell
both i mean he went to heaven for
offering the food to the to the pacheco
buddha but he also went to hell for
regretting it afterwards and he didn't
even know that this pajeka buddha was
enlightened
you know so
going with orthodox tarawata you really

got to be careful about
enlightened beings even i mean you don't
even know if they're enlightened or not
but if you have like some bad thought
about an enlightened being you can go to
hell for him there's a story of oh i
guess soraya
in the in the commentaries i think it's
the dhammapada commentary
where there's this guy named soraya
and um
there's this
enlightened monk
taking a bath in the river and
this this man soraya he's a rich man
he notices this monk and he's got this

this perfect golden complexion and he's
thinking i wish my wife had like
beautiful golden skin like that and
because of that thought he didn't know
that this monk was enlightened probably
even

but because of that thought he
immediately turned into a woman just
instantaneously boom

he's a female

and that was considered to be a
punishment in uh ancient india you know
it was like karmic retribution
and um he had to apologize years later
he's already married to some other guy
in in some other town taxilla i think
and uh he's he's or she at this point

has borne children to her husband
and then finally she meets an old friend
of hers from you know back when she was
male and tells tells him the whole story
and he says you gotta you gotta
apologize to this uh enlightened being
or apologize to this wise monk
and after she apologized
then she turned male again and then she
was ordained as a monk and became
enlightened but um
so according to orthodox buddhism
yeah i mean just the
slightest one negative thought about an
enlightened being can really mess you up
i don't really get that though i mean

i'm kind of skeptical

about such things i mean if you don't

even know whether if they're enlightened

or not

then uh

yeah which which reminds me of uh ken

wheeler again i suppose i shouldn't be

talking about him but he actually wrote

an article

accusing mahakasapa of murdering the

buddha

and i mean if these stories about

dissing enlightened beings are true and

if mahakapar really was fully aligned he

was the senior monk in the

in the sangha at the time of the

buddha's death he was the

the questioner at the the first council
and was considered to be enlightened he
was you know supposedly
the most outstanding monk with regard to
ascetic practices
and uh if someone is accusing him of
being a murderer i mean
yeah that's uh
from just from orthodox terrible to
buddhism that would be the road to hell
just assuming that he really was fully
in line
and didn't really murder the buddha
so
but again it's it's like as rob alias
dharma farmer here says

if karma is volition you know karma is a
mental state and you don't even know
maybe deep down there's like this
connection

like this empathic connection where deep
deep down you you have to know
that this person is uh a superior being
or something but

um

yeah

there is a lot of emphasis on this idea
in terravata that when you're
interacting with another being the more
advanced they are

you know the more benefit you get from
doing good things with regard to them
and the more danger the more you know

detriment you get from doing you know
bad things even thinking bad thoughts
and i really don't see how that works
it could just be

um

just early buddhists

trying to like glorify

their own position you know it's like

you better be careful about thinking bad

things about us because you don't know

maybe we're enlightened or something

so yeah it is it is kind of a weird

situation in terrible buddhism

but um i would be more inclined to just

stick with the idea that

um

karma is really a mental state and um
it might be that the aura would just
forgive you

you know if if they're fully enlightened
and you

you know kind of slight them you know

you bump up against them on the sidewalk
or something and don't say excuse me or
anything i doubt that they're gonna like
curse you or anything

so

yeah it is it is sort of uh

uh like an enigma maybe i should ask

john punedamo about it

but uh we did talk about it a little bit
in a recent video

but um

yeah it is it is kind of a strange
situation i've i've wondered about that
myself

and um

i would guess that really i mean it just
depends on your mental states and
whether they're enlightened or not
unless it does influence your mental
states in some mysterious subconscious
way

then it should be irrelevant

so i'll just move on to the next
question which is from

rafi 46

and rafi 46 says

a former christian who is a buddhist now

posted on reddit that he is upset that some christians are proselytizing in thailand i think about responding the following so he's thinking about saying in the following bit here

even if all tithes become christians you should not try to prevent this otherwise you will violate the second noble truth of buddhism if you have a desire to keep christianity out of thailand you will suffer because according to the second noble truth of buddhism any form of desire is the cause of suffering the buddha for example was against the oppressive caste system back then but he never urged his followers to actively

try to stop it

unquote does my response sound legit

well

i would just say that

i mean

if you do something you're not

necessarily motivated by craving

like if you just see that

one path

is superior to another path

then by following the superior path is

not necessarily

making suffering for yourself because

you're craving to follow the superior

path you always have to make choices and

you always have to

i mean you always have to have some kind of behavior

i mean it's really difficult to just sit motionless all the time

so

um

an example i give a lot is if you get a flat tire then you get out and change the flat tire doesn't mean that you're against the flat tire you know there's no hatred or anger necessarily towards that flat tire

and you just see that it means the thing to do is to fix the flat tire so you get out and fix it it's just what you do and it doesn't necessarily involve any you know misery inducing craving

and i mean you can go about just about
anything in this way i mean

like uh

feminists protesting or something um

i mean you can do it out of just like

love for for your their fellow women

you know i mean if they're motivated by

positive mental states

then you know it's a positive thing if

the woman next to them might be

motivated by hatred and resentment of

men and they're so they're doing

something negative even though they

might be just

walking down the same street holding

similar signs

um

so yeah i mean it's like

um

if you think that

people being buddhist in thailand would

make them happier and just out of

compassion

for the people of thailand you make

you know non-violent non-hostile

actions to preserve buddhism in thailand

and that's not necessarily doing

anything motivated by

craving

that is going to increase suffering

necessarily but it does depend on on

your volitions your your will you know

your

your perceptions also

so i mean there are enlightened ways of
going about it

wiser ways and more foolish ways and uh
if you've got wise motives

and you're doing it wisely then you're
doing something that's uh probably
pretty good

on the other hand if you just like hate
christians

and you're doing out of hatred for
christians and not love of dharma
then uh

yeah you're gonna be making the
situation worse

so

it reminds me of

a book that um

i read a long time ago it's one of the
seth books i read i read a few of those
and uh seth who is supposedly a
multi-dimensional entity

channeled through a woman jane roberts

um he said that you won't get peace by

hating war you get peace by loving peace

and you know it's similar to

to to this kind of situation you know if

you love dhamma and you try to promote

that

then you know you're doing something

fairly good whereas if you hate

christianity

and you know you do the same kind of

actions with that motive instead then
you're doing something negative
and making bad karma bad karma
so yeah just do what seems like the
right thing to do
and uh have some equanimity about it
and there you go so i'll just move on to
the next question which is from
yuichiro
and yuichiro says
what do you think of karma yoga have you
practiced something like it buddhism
emphasizes meditation but theoretically
you can become enlightened through yoga
of action
well

that's kind of a good question yeah

that's a good question

um in yoga i think there are four kinds

of let's see you've got karma yoga

you've got bhakti yoga

you've got

nyana what guyana yoga

you've got raja yoga

there might be another one but those are

the four that i remember

so

karma yoga is the yoga of action like

serves that's what mahatma gandhi was he

was a karma yogi

or somebody like um like mother teresa

in calcutta

could be called a karma yogi even though

she was a christian nun

then you've got bhakti yoga which is the
yoga of devotion towards a guru or

towards a god or

something and then you've got

gyana yoga which is you know like

studying the upanishads reflecting on

that and uh

just becoming

enlightened through gnosis through

knowledge

and then you've got raja yoga which is

essentially spiritual practice and

meditation

and of course buddhism

tends to emphasize the more head

oriented ones like the the nyana yoga

and

the raja yoga especially

and really doesn't put much emphasis on

karma yoga because karma just

perpetuates karma you know you do you do

actions it just perpetuates more actions

if there are volitional actions

so yeah buddhism really doesn't put a

lot of emphasis on karma yoga other than

just morality

you know like following the the rules of

monastic discipline in a sense could be

called a kind of

basic karma yoga but that's not what

gets you enlightened to believe that

actions will get you enlightened is uh

it's called sila bata para masa

which is uh like clinging to

morality and observances

that enlightenment is uh

you're not gonna like

cause enlightenment through your actions

you can facilitate enlightenment just by

you know doing good and avoiding doing

bad and so forth but um

so

with regard to karma yoga as yuichiro is

asking about here it could be done

through

a kind of selfless action like what is

promoted in the bhagavad-gita like the

bagala gita says you know whatever you

do

don't do it for the sake of

the end result just offer up

that and the end result to god

just put it all in god's hands

and um that might be self-view from the

buddhist point of view but at least it's

a kind of selfless action

you know it's not

action

motivated by you know selfish greed and

so forth and that could be a kind of

practice

that would be conducive to enlightenment

and i think that is how karma yoga is

interpreted

um at its highest level where

it's like you know it's not you really
doing it anymore you're just trying to
empty yourself out and just becoming
like a puppet of the will of of god or
something

so um yeah if you do it selflessly
then uh

with with no greed for the outcome
no attachment to uh the results of what
you're doing or to uh just the act
itself

then it i mean you can make progress
doing that

so

yeah so i think uh

it's it's really not for me

i've never really been into uh
service of my fellow man other than
through things that i enjoy like
answering questions for example
but um i'm really not
i've really never been called to like be
the lepers or anything
so

but i get it i mean it is a spiritual
practice i mean it's definitely got its
uh its benefits whether you can actually
become enlightened
by washing the feet of lepers or not i'm
not sure

but it could be i mean you can get
enlightened doing just about anything
so i'll just move on to the next

question and this is from air rain

and this is a history question

what effect did the cataclysm of 536

have on buddhism

in

in that region at the time i recently

heard that the period after was when

islam started spreading rapidly as

muhammad's family began feeding starving

populations that were affected etc there

must have been some serious upheavals

going on in india and central asia

during that period that also had lasting

influence on buddhism

question mark

well first i should point out

to those of you unfamiliar with the year
536 of the common era
that uh
yeah it was considered to be the most
miserable year in history it was just a
really bad year
and the main
bad thing about it
was
that there was some super volcano in
indonesia indonesia's got lots of icky
volcanoes that
explode every century or so
not the same one but um
you know they'll just just wipe out the
entire island all life on that island
and maybe a few surrounding ones and

we'll just darken the skies and cause no
summer

uh even in the northern hemisphere
and um it's happened a few times in
within in historical times

um back in the early 1800s i think there
was uh

what was it mount tambora exploded near
the island of bali and it was like the
year with no summer

and 536 was worse it was a really big
one and so it was uh

it caused a lot of starvation failed
crops just thousands of miles away the
whole world was cooled way down due to
all the dust and

and

debris in the air smoke and so forth

so there was that also 536 was the time

of uh the first pandemic of plague

which in the in the west was called the

plague of justinian because justinian

the great

of the uh eastern roman or byzantine

empire was uh sitting on the throne in

constantinople

and uh

i think it was like about half the

population of the roman empire died

around that time

just through

um just all kinds of calamities there

was wars going on and starvation and the

disease and everything but with regard to india and central asia which were buddhist predominantly buddhist at the time

there was almost no history really like organized systematic history of you know in this year this happened

it didn't really exist yet

in india and um so i mean i've never really studied

what was happening in india in the in the sixth century

or central asia i mean is they were most yeah so

i'm partly just ignorant on the subject of what was going on in india and

central asia in the mid 6th century and probably they weren't keeping a lot of accurate records they did not have an objective sense of history like in the west

like like the greeks in the and the hebrews they had this idea of or of uh objective history

and you know they would keep meticulous records and like egypt you can say that something happened in egypt in you know the year

2562 bc

because you know they've got the whole lineage of the pharaohs you know the third year of this pharaoh and and and on and on but in india and central asia

they really didn't operate that way
as far as i can tell
and so i would say the the main effects
on buddhism it was spreading into china
around that time following the trade
routes through central asia so it may
have been that like migrations
of people trying to to find greener
pastures
due to uh
especially the just the changes in the
weather due to the the volcano that
exploded and so forth
um you know it may have facilitated the
spread of buddhism
but aside from that i really

i'm really unsure what exactly was going
on in 536 in india and central asia
probably they were affected
but

i really can't say

so let's move on to the next question
here

from iz

and iz says

david what is your experience with
and or opinion on the sun lund seattle
method the one with people breathing
funny for 45 minutes and then sitting
still and we passeng
for a couple of hours

is it similar to the tenjidong method

you are briefly in touch with or does it

not involve hyperventilation what is
your opinion on the usefulness of
intense breathing as a concentration
method

well

it's it's a good question

good meditation question although i'm
really not

i've never practiced the sunline method

it is sort of uh

kind of a big deal in burma um it's not

one of the most popular meditation

methods but there is a sunlin meditation
center

in rangoon

and uh sun centers you know scattered

through burma

and sunlight seattle was highly regarded
and pretty much all i know about it is
that you start off breathing fast you're
breathing harder and faster than usual
and um

he meant our iz mentions the tangidang
method and it was the same with the
tangidone method except in the tangent
method you did it all the time i guess
in the solenoid method you start off
that way

and

yeah the tenji dom method i mean they
were just essentially hyperventilating
and then they'd get drunk on oxygen and
consider that to be pt which is uh one

of the seven factors of enlightenment
sort of like a kind of exhilaration or
pleasurable interest is often how it is
interpreted

and

so you'd have people just howling and
barking like dogs laughing

uncontrollably sobbing you know flopping
around on the floor like like beached
fishes and stuff

and um

it was sort of yeah i mean it was not
normal

and sunland acid is is probably more
reputable than that

you know you don't continue breathing

hard until you're just
you know hyperventilating big time and
although iz says it's for 45 minutes
which i didn't know i thought it was
just sort of at the beginning of the sit
you would breathe a little harder and
the the
like the logic behind that
especially uh tenjidong seattle was was
talking about this
is um
you know when you're you're breathing a
little faster than usual you have to
keep your attention on the breath so it
helps to keep your mind from wandering
away
although of course there is the danger

of uh just hyperventilating
although i mean you can't get into
altered states through hyperventilating
there's like stanislav graf
um who did spend a lot of time at the
sln institute in california he used to
use
psychedelics like lsd to
like induce altered states of
consciousness in people but then when
lsd became illegal
he switched over to just breath work or
what holotropic breath work which is
essentially hyperventilating
so i mean it can have some uh
some positive

effects but

if you read the the poly texts like the

the saudi patano for example

it says you're supposed to be calming

the body

as as you're meditating you know so

if

i traditionally in terrible buddhism if

you're if you're doing an upon

meditating on the breath

then your breath becomes more subtle you

start breathing you know sort of

shallower and slower and if you get into

fourth genre or so they say

i mean you can become like a hibernating

squirrel where your your breath almost

stops

so

um in the text it's you know calming the
body which is

usually interpreted as calming the
breath

you know i breathe in calming the breath
i breathe out which is pretty much the
opposite

of what someone and tanjidong are
encouraging

i told tenjidong about that once and uh
kind of objecting to his method which is
unthinkable for anyone but uh us western
barbarians

and he said that's only when you're
you're making really

you know when you're getting to advanced
meditation you know you're really making
progress then it starts calming down but
that's really not what the text says

so

i did uh i did meet somebody who spent
some time at the salomon meditation
center in in rangoon he said yeah it
works fine it's a it's a valid method
but he had some strange ideas

so

um my best advice i mean if you've got
the uh

the time and the

you know the the wherewithal

to to try it

and you can see for yourself whether it

works i mean that's really the
the gold standard or the litmus test for
meditation is you just try it and if it
works you know with eyes open eyes
closed breathing fast breathing slow
whatever it is
you know if you try it and it works you
know your your mind is settling down and
you're getting into greater clarity
then uh
yeah continue with it until it stops
working
but yeah i'm really not no expert this
is it's kind of unfortunate in this um
this episode of question and answer i'm
being asked about

certain things that i really don't know
a whole lot about sunlin method alan
watts in the year 536 in asia
so

yeah it's it's just
a hazard of of this profession i guess
so finally

the last question
of of the show

is from chakra gosha

although there's sort of an addended and
added question

after this

chakra gauchos says

is sex for procreation more virtuous
than sex for pleasure

and then uh rafi 46

added after chakra goes asked this
question

he added

didn't the buddha condemn all forms of
sexuality

well

that's kind of a good question

both of these are good questions

so it is true getting

sort of answering rafi 46 first

um yeah all forms of sexuality are

uh discouraged by the buddha

for people who are serious about

practicing dhamma

um especially at advanced levels

but

um

just because you know it increases

desire

going with the four noble truths desire

is the cause of all suffering

and uh

sex is a strong cause of of desire it

really induces it sometimes

so there is that but getting back to

chakra gosha here

um is sex for procreation more virtuous

than sex for pleasure um probably i mean

in most cases i would say yeah

because sex for pleasure is you know

you're wallowing in sensuality which is

what a good buddhist isn't supposed to

do or at least a good buddhist is

supposed to keep that to a minimum
wallowing in pleasure
and so if someone is just having sex for
procreation there's still
um i mean just having babies
is is kind of a moral dilemma
because some people will say in buddhism
having babies is good because it's so
rare to get a human birth
that um
that is you're doing something good by
bringing human babies into this world
because a human birth is such a precious
opportunity
because it's almost only
humans that really have the option of

becoming enlightened you know it's like
in the lower realms
um the beings are are so
tormented or confused
that they really don't have the option
of striving to practice dhamma or
they're just so ignorant you know like
animals

or in the higher realms it's so nice
it's so pleasant that people really
aren't spurred on
to strive for something better so the
the human level according to buddhism is
just the right balance
of

uh wisdom and and unhappiness
that you're you're spurred on to

practice dhamma

but on the other hand um

going with the second noble truth or the first noble truth which is too existent to suffer i mean by having children you could be argued that you're really just damning some being to one of the higher levels or medium levels of hell

that you know you're just damn you're just dooming someone to a life of unhappiness because to exist is to suffer

but just setting that aside because that's really not the question here is sex for procreation more virtuous than sex or

pleasure individually

um this you're just living in the world
obviously a monk wouldn't be having sex
at all

um you're living in the world maybe it's
just the reality that you should have
children because

in a

in a culture like ancient india

your children were your social security
there were no pension plans or anything
there were no um

what do you call them almost at the

ak-47 what what that that pension thing
that people do

have you even got one i can't remember
what it's called

for

something

anyway

you know you your kids would support you

when you get old so i mean that was just

what you do

um

i mean in most traditional societies i

mean that's just what it's like a

person's duty to have children

so i mean if you're having sex for

procreation

as your duty to have children without

wallowing in it all that much you know

it's not orgy astic or whatever then

yeah i mean to the extent that you have

less

desire you're less wallowing in

in sensual pleasure

and sensuality than uh yeah it would be

less immoral i mean

saying more virtuous

um is uh

maybe not the the most precise or exact

way of saying it'd be like less

unvirtuous

you know the less you enjoy it i suppose

sort of like food you know

putting salt and pepper on your your

food to make it taste better is uh

it's kind of the same thing it's it's in

a way it's it's immoral essentially from

the buddhist point of view whereas

you're better just eating something
bland and plain just for the sake of
keeping your body healthy so you can
continue to practice dhamma

so

yeah rafi 46 is correct that the buddha
did

discourage all forms of sexuality

because it is like the one of the major
attachments that keeps us uh

keeps us stuck in samsara

um i've read it in a book once it was

like desire for sex is

the main reason for

being reborn or reincarnation and the

other ones aren't irrelevant they don't

matter

which was a kind of a joke

so that's it that is all the questions

and if you have any questions and i'm

happy to

try to answer them as you may have

noticed in this i

really can't make any guarantees

that i will have any expertise in the

field but

with regard to

you know basic buddhism basic buddhist

philosophy metaphysics

certainly questions about

my previous lifestyle as an ascetic monk

living in burma that kind of thing

um

yeah i know quite a lot about that
biology

i know quite a lot about that
so you know questions along those lines
are more likely to be answered
intelligently
by me

and if you do have any questions just
feel free to
include them
in the comments below
or

on the discord server if you have access
to that
or on the
my subscribe star

channel if you have access to that

and

be sure to

like and subscribe smash that bell

button as they say

and look through my url links you might

find something interesting and

be happy

hello and welcome to question and answer
number 28 a
i am your host ponyo bassa
and the reason why i'm doing 28a
is because in my last question and
answered that i
did
several days ago now
i overlooked one question it was the
second question and somehow i just
skipped over it
that's possibly because it's a question
about monastic discipline
and uh the very next question after that
one was also about monastic discipline
so maybe

in my mind i got confused

and there is a precedent i've done uh

i think it was like 2a or 3a or

something like that when i was still a
monk

so

this isn't a really breaking new ground
and

also i should say that the person who
asked the question

who is

fred alias alfred

um is uh

is like a faithful supporter and

i don't want to be neglecting him

so

fred asks

or

if he asks at the end of this so be
patient

i was reading your book and was gob
smacked by how many rules there are for
monks which are almost impossible to
keep

as for example if you can't find a monk
to confess to

the frustration must be
counterproductive in my opinion does it
create a guilt complex

okay so that's kind of an interesting
question and there's also a few other
things

considering that this is its own video

that i can touch on and maybe turn this
into a

a full-blown discussion or something
but

fred says he was reading my book and i
assume he's talking about this one which
is

essays in tiravata buddhism

by ponyo basa john d reynolds

j.d reynolds

and um

in this book there's a lot of talk about
monastic issues there's some uh chapters
just about technical

matters with regard to monastic

discipline and so forth

and so uh yeah i mean it's it's easy

to be gobsmacked by how many rules there
are from monks

um i estimated

when i was a monk that there were

probably between two and three thousand

most of these are not in the potty mocha

rules a lot of people think that they're

just the potty mocha rules

which uh what is it 273 227 that's it

227

parimoja rules

um but they're most of the rules of

monastic discipline

are outside of the potty monka the rules

of monastic discipline in the in the

pali topitica are five thick asian

volumes it's you know this thick of
books

and although most of those aren't just
rules there's like the origin story for
each rule and all the various
permutations of the major rules

so i mean it's not just lists of rules
all the way through

but there are probably between two and
three thousand rules somewhere somewhere
thereabouts and um

they're based on ancient india

which makes uh following them outside of
ancient india kind of tricky although it
also makes some rules pretty much
impossible to follow

like

accepting food from the hands of a naked
ascetic

is uh

you know it used to be a possibility in
ancient india but it's pretty rare

nowadays using a human skull

as an alms bowl is against the rules

things like that don't really come up

very often rules with regard to

interacting with bikunis or ordained

terrible buddhist nuns

um that's kind of controversial because

the majority of theravada buddhist

monastics will say that

bikunis don't exist anymore they went

extinct hundreds of years ago

and so

for most

theravada buddhist monks

also all the rules with regard to

interacting with nuns are a non-issue

now

but still there are lots of rules and

pretty much everything is regulated like

even going to the bathroom there's

probably

i mean you're well up into double digits

with regard to all the rules just

involved in taking a dump

so

yeah it's like as as fred says

there are lots of rules that are almost

impossible to keep and even really

strict monks will break rules sometimes
because some rules can be inadvertent
like there's a rule against drinking
alcohol

but

even if you drink alcohol by accident
it's still against rule you have still
committed a pachitia offense requiring
confession

and so

even when i was a very strict monk
living in asia

sometimes people give you a medicine and
i'd ask you know this doesn't have
alcohol in it no no no alcohol and then
it turns out to be like 100 proof

or somebody gives you fruit juice and in
the tropical heat it starts fermenting
and by the time like in the afternoon
you know of the same day that you
receive it you take a drink and it's
like wine

so then you have to make confession
also for example if a monk is asleep
and then a woman
sits down or lies down under the same
roof while he's asleep and then gets up
and leaves he's committed an offense
even though he was unconscious during
the whole time

so

even really strict monks will have
difficulty some

the rules are set up in such a way that
it's

sometimes you just cannot avoid breaking
a rule for example

let's say a monk is in public he's at a
bus station or something and he has to
pee well

you can't go into the bathroom with your
upper robe on that's against the rules
that's a dukata offense or an offensive
wrongdoing but

at the same time

um

let's see what is it you can't go in
with your robe on but you can't take
your robe off in public your upper row

you can't go bare-chested in public
unless your upper robe has been stolen
so it's i mean it's like a no-win
scenario you break a rule either way
either that you just go outside and
squat behind a building and pee or
something

so

there are lots of rules and some rules
are just really weird like they're
anachronistic not even just because of
ancient india

for example there are lots of rules with
regard to taking care of your arms bowl
a monk has this begging bowl it's one of
the requisites one of the the eight or
nine possessions that a monk is required

to possess

and that is an alms bowl and in ancient india they were mostly made out of baked clay

but

at some point in the history of theravada

most alms bowls started being made out of iron and so you don't have to be as careful it means it's like

you're not allowed to put your bowl

on top of a table you have to put it

under the under the table on the floor

because if it falls off the table it can

break but an iron bowl isn't going to

break

and there's this one rule i've i've
mentioned this before

there's this one rule that says a monk
is not allowed to open a door

with his umble bombs bowl in his hands

and the rule is to prevent you from

knocking this clay bowl against the door
and breaking it

and so even though i had an iron bowl i

was trying to follow the rules strictly

and so what it would require is you have

to set your bowl down you can't just set

it down on the floor because that's

against the rolls too against the rules

too you have to set it down on a cloth

or on a bowl stand then you open the

door then you pick your bowl up you step

through the door you have to set it back down again not on the floor or the ground you have to put something under it to cushion it and then you close the door and then you pick your bowl back up and off you go

and

in burma or southeast asia

especially during the monsoon season

there's lots and lots of mosquitoes and

you're going through this ritual with

the door open

um you're letting mosquitoes in

about one per second at some times of

year and some of those mosquitoes are

the anopheles kind

and it's just pointless because

i mean

the bowl isn't even clay you know the

bowl will not break hitting against that

door and for

more than 10 years

i followed that rule just because i

wanted to be a strict monk didn't want

to break the rules and you know

nobody forced me to become a monk i just

had this idea if i'm going to be a monk

i should follow the rules and early on

in my career as a monk

um

it was about the only thing i could

really come close to mastering

in buddhism buddhist practice you've got

the

the ethical trinity of sila samadhi and
panya

is morality including parimo

which is the morality of following the
rules of monastic discipline samadhi is
concentration and panya is understanding
or wisdom

and especially as a junior monk i didn't
have very good samadhi and i was not
satisfied with my wisdom that's why i
became a monk in the first place but the
sila part i could kind of
kind of nail that one down and so i was
more or less fanatically strict
especially at first

and um eventually

especially like not opening a door with
the ball in my head at some point as a
senior monk

i just thought this is stupid and so i
started breaking that rule and most
monks including most strict monks are
breaking rules all the time that's even
setting aside that probably more than 95
percent of theravada buddhist monks
handle money which is strictly forbidden
for example just keeping extra robes
wearing like the the kung fu pajamas or
the sweaters and the hoodie the hats you
know the stocking caps and the socks and
all that technically that's against the
rules

but um

it just um

i think it was the thai sangha raja said

it was okay

to wear this kind of stuff in the

temperate zone and so you've got monks

essentially wearing arctic expedition

gear snow suits and that kind of stuff

who are living in cold areas

and

the tai san garaga really does not have

the authority to change linear rules

so

it's just like well he said it's okay so

we're doing it and i was guilty of that

also

uh with regard to one rule i had this
book on monastic discipline the winnie
amuca

which was written by a thai sangha raja
from 100 years ago

and he said it's okay to look into a
mirror when you shave

according to the rules a monk is not
allowed to look into a mirror unless
he's got like a sore on his face or
something he's needing to look at in
order to you know put medicine on it or
something

and um this thai sangha raja said if
you're shaving

then it's okay and so that was like the
one rule that i broke from the beginning

to the end

that is just shaving without looking
into a mirror is is not easy i mean the
back of your head you have to you have
to go without you just use your fingers
you know you just shave by braille

but um still it's so much more
convenient it's such a pain in the neck
an unnecessary pain in the neck
um just not to use a mirror that
i pretty much cheated on that one

but um

with the thai sangha raja's blessings of
100 years ago

but uh getting back to fred's question
here

let's see how he was gobsmacked by how many rules there are from monks which are almost impossible to keep as for example if you can't find a monk to confess to well actually

that's not really against the rules

if you can't find a monk to confess to you are excused from not making confession

so

um i think fred may have misunderstood that part

but even if you committed a serious offense you know like a sangha di seisa offense there are 13 of them this is like the next level below just excommunication there are four rules

warranting excommunication plus

um i'm pretty sure there's like the

unofficial fifth rule so it's like if

you have sex

it was with a woman with a man with an

animal

you put your pee pee into into an

orifice of somebody else

then

then you're excommunicated you cannot

you're kicked out of the monk hood just

immediately even if nobody knows about

it you're not a monk anymore even though

you might continue wearing the robes

you might not even know that you're

you're excommunicated you might be just

ignorant of the rules

doesn't matter you're not really a monk

anymore

second is stealing

or taking

anything i mean according to the wording

of the rule stealing anything valuable

enough that you could get arrested for

it

um

the commentaries changed that rule

somewhat

and said that it was

uh stealing anything worth a coin called

a pada

and or even even in the polytechs it

kind of redefined it to that just to

make it more precise

but the thing is

the the commentators who came afterward

didn't know what a pata was worth and so

they had this

um just made up

almost mythological explanation of what

a potter is it had like five rice green

weights of gold five rice green weights

of silver five ice cream weights of

copper

and maybe five rice grain weights of

of iron and the thing is

if you look at the archaeological record

of the numismatic record such a coin

never existed

but there are lots of potas of two kinds
the blue ones and the red ones
and

i think the ones in the commentary
are specifically the blue ones
and

the two kinds of pota are silver and
copper

or bronze silver and copper i'm pretty
sure and so blue would probably be the
silver ones

and i mean they're worth a fraction of
what

the commentaries say because there's no
rice grain weights of gold in it at all
and so you steal like even like a candy
bar

technically

um

you would be

you would be excommunicated so that's

the second one first one is sex second

one is stealing third one

is murder

which includes helping women get an

abortion it includes

uh talking someone into committing

suicide

it includes you know hiring a hit man

poisoning somebody anything like that

using black magic whatever it is if you

cause another human being to die and a

human life according to terrible

buddhism begins at conception

you're out you're excommunicated do not

pass go do not collect 200

and then fourth and and these are an

ascending order of seriousness

so sex is the least serious of the of

the four big ones then stealing then

murder and worse than even murder is a

monk

knowingly lying about having attained

superhuman mental states so if he says

that he's enlightened in order to get

famous in order to get support when he

knows he's not enlightened that's it

he's not really a monk anymore even

though he might continue wearing robes

and so forth

so below that is sanga di cesa and i
can't even remember what god
such a long digression let's see oh yeah
if you commit a sangha dissents
you have to take penance
for six days and six nights and it's
it's really a pain in the neck taking
past i've taken penance for it for doubt
not being sure wanting to just make sure
do the penance just so i won't have any
doubts anymore
because there's borderline cases
so
you've got to make confession oh wait
okay you have to take penance for six
days and six nights plus the number of

days that you didn't confess it the
number of days that you essentially
concealed the offense

and so it does say in the in the text i
mean if there's no other monks around
you if you're just living alone in a
forest as a hermit you are excused to
some degree

from not making confession i mean you
should make a reasonable effort to you
know get your stuff

stored away whatever what little things
you have if you're living alone in the
forest and then going and finding a mock
team fest too and the monk has to be a
monk who is

who hasn't committed the same events

and that was a tricky one that was
that's another one that
pretty much no asian monks follow you're
not allowed to confess an offense like a
broken rule to a monk who has broken the
same rule and he hasn't confessed that
either and some monasteries you know
they they're all almost all the monks
are handling money they can't really
confess it and it wouldn't matter anyway
if they confessed it because you that's
called the nisagia pachidiya events
where you have to get rid of whatever is
against the rules in this case money
before you can make confession of course
the monks don't do that

so

you have to go and find a monk that
hasn't done the same thing and make
confession to him

and as i say if you're out in a forest
or something you're in a remote area
maybe it's the monsoon season when
you're not even supposed to be traveling
then you've got an excuse for for not
making the confession

so

i think fred here may have misunderstood
that part
but he gets to the next part here the
frustration must be counterproductive in
my opinion does it create a guilt
complex

um

it can if a monk is really strict

although as i say

nowadays most monks are not really

strict including monks who are

considered to be really strict by people

who don't know what all the rules are

um

but still i mean it's like

um

it can create a guild complex just

um

not being

like with regard to sangria i said that

i did

penance for it

uh two or three times in burma

just because of doubts

you know it's like

most sanggarisa rules i think all of

them they have to be deliberate

intentional rules so if let's say

um

you're you're on a bus and you rub up

against a pretty girl and you enjoy it

well it's a it's a sangha you say

offense to touch a woman with your mind

inflamed by by passion which just means

you enjoy it but you have to do it on

purpose

and then you're like pulling your hand

away it's like did i try to prolong the

contact the way the way i pulled my hand

away you know that kind of a thing and a
monk can just sit there
cycle analyzing himself
like did i deliberately do anything you
know even just to move the width of a
sesame seed
you know that's it's the way they talk
in the texts you know if i made this
even the slightest effort
to in this case prolong the contact with
the pretty girl on the bus
um just by the way of you know moving my
hand away this way kind of across her
leg or something instead of like
straight back or whatever then
then you've committed the committed the

offense and you have to do the penance
and all that so that's really
more frustrating
and counterproductive
than let's say you know you didn't you
didn't um put your bowl down before
opening the door
um

you know in a case like that most monks
just make up their mind whether they're
going to follow that rule or not and if
they're just going to set it aside
saying you know it's like it's just
it's an anachronism
it's kind of silly nowadays it doesn't
really fit the culture or you know my
bowl isn't clay

then you know you can just kind of set
that one aside and still have like a
clear conscience
because i mean the rule may have been
valid at one time but
it uh it kind of stopped being that way
you know it's just really has
degenerated into like a pointless
more or less meaningless rule although
some strict monks would say that one
reason for following all these rules is
to just set aside your own personal
preferences that it's like pride
that you would you would say the rules
dumb i don't have to follow it
so that's that's the consideration also

and it there is some validity to that i
think

where you just say you know even if it's
a dumb rule even if it's pointless and
meaningless

still that's what the rule says nobody
forced me to become a monk and so i'm
just going to follow it anyway and i was
kind of that way for first many years of
my monkhood until finally i just started
um

i don't know just became less fanatical
or
or

it's sort of human nature that you start
off strict and then you kind of
backslide gradually it's very rare for

somebody to get stricter as they as they
progress in the mongkut although it does
happen maybe some monk

um i met a few

who

they're ordained at a really lax

monastery and they're just following

along with all the other monks are doing

and then finally they read the you know

they start studying the rules of

monastic discipline and realize just how

sloppy they have been

and then they might move to a stricter

monastery

or maybe maybe they just move to a

stricter monster and then they they

realize what uh what a slack monk they
were at first

with regard to following the rules

so

um yeah i think just being in doubt

about breaking certain rules

can create a guilt complex

and um

so some monks will just do the

confession even if they're not sure

which technically is also against the
rules

so there's a rule against that too in

fact there's a special confession you

make if you're in doubt you don't know

for sure if you've broken a rule or not

you notice going back to the monk who is

sleeping a woman comes into the building
might be a big building even she sits
down or lies down and gets up and leaves
while he's asleep he's not entirely sure
you know he suspects that
so i mean you you're not supposed to
confess the offense
if you're not sure that you broke the
rule
and
in a way that it's
it's convenient because it kind of
reduces the guilt complex it's like you
know did i commit isango du seisa
offense
um you know if you're not sure then

you're not really concealing the defense
you don't have to do the extra penance
for concealing the offense you know not
making confession because you're not
sure

so there's that consideration also but
sometimes you think you know did i
commit a sanghadi cesa offense
um you know because you can't just
confess that you got to do the penance
and at the end of the six days and six
nights plus however many extra days of
penance then you've got to be reinstated
to the state of being a monk in good
standing by at least 20 monks in good
standing and some places it's hard
to get 20 monks together

to to do the ceremony it's called an
abana ceremony

uh called what in burmese which is you
know escaping the duties of the of the
penance

or or leaving the duties

and like in the west getting 20 monks
together might be might be difficult
and also just doing the the penance the
more monks there are in a monastery the
harder it is to do the penance because
of one part of the penance you have to
make confession to every monk at the
monastery every day you have to confess
that you broke a song that you say rule
if you're really strict you even tell

them what rule you broke which can be an embarrassing rule for example um having an orgasm on purpose is one of these sangha decision rules

and uh if monks are coming and going it's like you go to make confession to monk so and so

and they say oh he left this morning and it's like well i didn't get to make confession to him so that day doesn't count so monks will take extra days of penance just to make sure

that you know they got at least six they got at least six good ones in so there's all kinds of frustrations that can take place

um

maybe like fred here is saying it can
involve a guilt complex

but um it leads to the whole issue of
how to be a

a theravada buddhist monk a strictly
practicing one in the west

and

i've already mentioned that it's almost
impossible

or let's let's not say almost impossible
it's

it's most monks even relatively strict
monks just do not follow the rules in
the west for example robes

and some of it i mean with regard to
robes i never broke the rules about

robes to my knowledge maybe it was some
one of those you know accidental
unconscious ones

but

um

i learned

just studying the rules

that monks wore much smaller robes than

they were nowadays in in the buddhist

time there were a row about half the

size and it would just be thrown over

both shoulders kind of like a shawl

and

when your books admit to this ah john

tennis earl's book on wunia he mentions

this also

and um

but

now

monks robes are much bigger and there's this elaborate ways especially tie monks they've got these elaborate ways where this arm is all wrapped up even if this arm this shoulder is uncovered like if you're making confession or you're bowing to another monk you have to uncover your right shoulder

but even then there they got this other arm all wrapped up in this elaborate way and you can't do that with thick robes it's like obviously if you're living in a cold climate the thing to do is just

get thick robes like wool robes it was
just what i did i had thick wool robes
and they were small and you just cover
yourself

like like a shawl

and i could be relatively comfortable
down to about freezing

if you're living like northern canada or
maybe like scandinavia or something even
that's not going to be good enough you
don't wear socks for example your toes
are going to get frostbite or whatever
but you know down to about freezing
there's really no

valid excuse

for not following the rules unless you
just don't want to follow rules

you just want you're a conformist you
just want to follow along with by
strictly following a corrupt tradition
you say whatever the sangha raja says
that's what i'll do or whatever
but it's really it's really not that
difficult

to just wear three robes three three
articles of clothing lower robe upper
robe outer robe and stay warm down to
freezing

and uh

sandals you know it's like a monk is not
allowed to wear

um

any kind of footwear other than sandals

that leave the toes and the heel exposed
so birkenstocks would be okay flip-flops
um

just someone's got like straps

but um still

in the west following the rules of
monasticism

the rules of monastic discipline
strictly

can be really tricky because we're not
living in ancient india anymore for
example a monk is not allowed to cook
his own food he's not allowed to store
food overnight if he's going to eat
something he has to get it without
asking for it the same morning that he
eats it

and in the west that doesn't work very
easily and i fasted

numerous times when i was living in a
burmese place

a burmese monastery in california just
because it wasn't convenient for anybody
to come and offer food that day and the
burmese monks would just go in and cook
their own food but i just refused to do
it

and it caused problems and the monks
started scrambling like the the abbot
started scrambling to make sure that
somebody would come and offer food
because he was afraid i was just gonna
starve to death

because it was very common at probably
most asian monasteries in the west that
the monks will just prepare their own
food if nobody comes and offers it to
them

and nevertheless it is against the rules
i suppose you could bring in the famine
loophole there is a famine loophole in
the rules of monastic discipline which
state that if a monk

uh just can't get food like there's a
famine the people the the villagers who
usually offer the food just can hardly
feed themselves so they're not feeding
the monks enough

then monks can pick fruit off the ground
that has spontaneously detached from

trees like some of the the hindu swamis
have done

but um

yet there are so many like with regard
to food with regard to

um clothing with regard to money with
regard to women

you know just not touching a woman in
the west

can be difficult not traveling with a
woman by arrangement you know if the the
only driver you can get the monks have
to go to such and such place you know
they've been invited to give a talk or
something and if the woman is a driver
and you make arrangements with her you

know let's go at eight o'clock eight
o'clock or something

it's a pachidia offense you've just
broken a rule if if you actually do it
so there's all these rules that really
don't fit the modern west and it just
comes to this

this issue and this question of
um you know how are theravata buddhist
monks especially the ones who want to be
good strict monks following the rules
properly how are they going to exist in
the west

and as i already said somebody like the
thai sangha raja really has no authority
to change rules especially outside of
thailand you know he has no more

authority over

a western monk living in the west than

the thai prime minister has

so that is the question i mean what are

monks going to do if they are going to

survive in the west and it seems like

you got two choices you can strictly

adhere to ancient indian rules you know

iron age ganges valley

and

buddhism is practically guaranteed to be

no more than just a a tiny fringe

movement

or the monks can start fudging on rules

and um

i've had this idea for a long time that

there should just be like a kind of
quasi monkhood in the west where the
monks

are

not fully ordained as teravod and bikus
and so they can have

relaxed rules i mean they can still be
renunciants

they can still

you know not handle money even really
although that's that's another tricky

one like if you're the habit of a

monastery you know the bill's got to get
paid in the west in burma out of

monastery there's no bills to pay now

especially if you're out in the forest
with no electricity or anything

is sangha property

you know there's just no bills it's free

but in the west nothing is free

so

even even just to have somebody else

take care of it

is against the rules for a monk to even

consent to somebody keeping money on his

behalf is against the rules which makes

pretty much even mo the strictest monks

in the west

uh breaking the same rules if they're

handling it themselves

so it's very complicated

and

should monks

be lacks to some degree to compensate
for the fact that they're not living in
the iron age ganges valley that's that's
a debate that um
really as i see it the cleanest way of
going about it is just set up like a
quasi monkey that can be approved by the
monks you know they can say you know we
acknowledge this as a theravada buddhist
movement even though they're not
ordained monks and the nuns can do the
same thing which would make them
uh on an equal footing with the monks if
that is seen as appropriate
instead of as the
the people that have tried to revive the
bikuni order in the west

um and in in the westernized sri lankan
monasteries to some degree

they're doing it for the sake of gender
equality partly

largely

and then the nuns just don't follow the
rules that are discriminatory against

women because the rules are much

stricter against women in most respects

than they are against men you know the

rules are stricter for nuns than they

are for monks for example even the most

senior nun has to bow to the most junior

monk

and you know they just ignore that like

nuns aren't even allowed to sit

cross-legged

because they might consent to the touch

of the heel as it says

and um

i won't get into that

but i mean they just

it's like these these women and the men

who help them then the monks who ordain

them or whatever they're helping them to

become

nuns

just for the name bikuni that's really

the official status of being called a

bikuni is really the main point here and

in a lot of cases it's mainly due to

ideas of gender equality or some such

nothing preventing these nuns from

just you know following whatever rules
they want which could be tailored to fit
western society much better than just
following or pretending to follow
ancient indian rules that are then
largely ignored

so again i'm saying that probably the
best way would be to set up some
new

um you know quasi-monkhood quasi nunhood
where

you know the the founders of it can get
together and agree on what rules would
be strict still in the spirit

but

not

so anachronistic and foreign that they
just will not fit
western society
because as i've said before
a monk living in the west especially if
he's a strict one he's trying to follow
the rules about food about money
especially
then he's like a tropical potted plant
that has to live in a greenhouse or
indoors with people taking care of it it
can't live naturally
monk can live naturally in in southeast
asia like as a monk
in burma you can just wander around you
can sleep under trees if the government
will let you if you're far enough away

from government offices

you take your bowl

if you're hungry in the morning you take

your bowl you just walk into a village

if the people there are buddhists

you'll at least get rice

so you can you can do that in asia but

in the west as a general rule there may

be exceptions but as a general rule

you just can't live that way you can't

just wander around

some monks have done it

maybe charismatic ones they got really

good karma or something they can just

take off walking and

um i've heard of some monks that would

just stand outside of a grocery store
and people would come out and they might
try to offer the money and the monks
will say no we don't accept money so
then they would offer you know food you
know package of
you know dry ramen noodles or something
which you can eat without cooking
i learned that

um

so i mean there are kind of there are
ways that monks can adapt
you know instead of walking house to
house

um where nobody's gonna offer food maybe
you know you can stand outside of a
grocery store maybe like a trader joe's

or something where the people are kind
of liberal and more open-minded to that
kind of a thing

and um

but still i mean it does seem like the
only way

that theravada buddhists

renunciants

in the west

can really

um

you know they can practice like monks

without breaking rules would be to just

set up a new kind of brotherhood a new

kind of monkhood they wouldn't be called

bikus but aside from that they could

live as close to monks as possible uh
close to being monks ordained monks and
the nuns can just set up
likewise
and they'd be
you know if it was seen as appropriate
they'd be just completely equal to monks
you know they wouldn't have to bow to
them that kind of thing unless they were
senior
like there's uh one of the many rules
is if you meet uh if a monk
meets a mangu senior him he's supposed
to bow to him unless he knows that he's
completely shameless
then he doesn't have to
but um we don't we don't need to get

into all all these rules there's just so many of them

so i guess i've i've had my say i've done more than answered fred's uh fred's question

and uh

so

i guess i guess that's it that's the end of q a number 28 a

and uh if you have any questions for like uh number 29 you're quite welcome to

leave them in the comments below

um or if you have access to the discord server or my subscribe star channel you can leave them there also um leaving

them by other venues like emailing me
sometimes it can get lost

in the shuffle

so probably your best bet is uh to ask
your questions below

this video

in the in the comment sections

and uh just check out the url links you
can find the the links to like getting
this book and uh the others and uh find
out my other social media presences and
so forth

and

be happy

hello and welcome to episode 29 of
question and answer i am your host
panial basa

and i am sitting in my front yard in the
soupy humidity of a south carolina
summer

just uh to have good scenes good scenery
including the fishpond that has loaches
in it

but uh i can do a separate video about
loaches some other time i suppose

so i suppose i should just get to the
question answering part which is after
all the most important part of these
videos

and we don't have like a really ungodly

amount of questions here which is good i
suppose because we should avoid
excessive ungodliness in our lives
so the first question is from carl n
and carl n says is the becoming that is
talked about in the second noble truth
the same as the becoming
link

of dependent origination how exactly
would you define becoming i've heard a
monk define it as quote the taking on of
an identity based on a particular desire
in a world of experience unquote
thoughts

question mark

well that's a good question i think that
is a good philosophical question

about uh what exactly does bava mean and
usually

it is

rendered into english as becoming

becoming

um

which isn't very explanatory um and i

don't have the exact formula of the four

noble truths here

but if my memory serves me correctly

um

the bava or becoming is referring to

in in the second noble truth like

craving an attachment that results in

bavar

or are conducive to bavar which would be

in that case

something like uh continued existence in
samsara

and that's generally what

means at least superficially it means
continued existence in samsara

but

when you get to dependent origination or
padiccha samupada things get more

complicated because padiccha pada is

um on the one hand it's considered to be
central to buddhist philosophy like

there are sutas at least one where the
buddha says

you know if you if you see

you know if you see padiccho samupada you
see just dharma dharma is padiccha

sangupada

um you know if you understand that you
understand buddhism essentially

um

and also on there's a legend that the
buddha

considered

some of pata to be so subtle so

difficult to understand that he almost
just didn't teach buddhism at all he

almost became like a hermit buddha a
pacheco buddha

and um

just was just going to keep his mouth
shut because he figured nobody would
understand dependent co-arising or

dependent origination or conditioned
genesis or there's a whole bunch of
different names for it which indicates
that it's not really all that well
understood by the translators into
english

and it really wasn't all that well
understood

um by ancient monks and medieval
commentators

so the buddha came pretty close to being
entirely right on on his guess that
nobody would understand it

um

in buddhism it crystallized fairly early
into uh the 12 knee donna theory which
is 12 links

which is explaining you know this causes
that that causes that that causes that
which explains what causes reincarnation
essentially

so

it starts with ignorance usually not
always there are some versions where it
starts with something else like papancha
sanka but we don't need to get into that
um

so bavar in independent court dependent
co-origination

um it comes in between upper donna and
jyati

so upadhana usually is translated as
clinging

and jyati is translated as birth so
that's

jyati is uncontroversial

so the way i would interpret upadhana is
literally it means uptaking

and so

it i would consider that i mean uptake

because you have

craving you have uptake you know you

just accumulate

in your life

and because of that

this uptake you've got

and

i interpret it to mean

the just the momentum of existence

it's like it's essentially karma and

the ancient monks

agreed that bova in dependent

origination does mean essentially karma

it's the karma in this life that results

to taking on the next burst that's why

bova leads to jyati or birth so ex

becoming quote unquote

results in

birth

which according to the orthodox

tereboden explanation means

that your karma in this life

results in taking a next life you know

rebirth reincarnation

so

um but i interpret karma also to just

mean like the momentum

of your of your mind it's the momentum

of mind psychic and momentum

and uh so that results in further

existence regardless of whether it's

um you know another hour or another life

so

i think

uh surprisingly i answered that one

fairly quickly

let's see i'll go over the question

again just to make sure is the becoming

that is talked about the second noble

truth the same as the becoming link of

dependent origination it can be

um

if you talk to some abidama scholar they

might quibble and say that there are
subtle differences or some such but it
could be interpreted the same
it just in in the sense of
just

further existence and samsara or the
force of further existence the force of
existence

you know just the momentum of your
volitional acts of your of your
personality for lack of a better word
uh

so

yeah i guess i answered that one so i'll
just move on to the next question
and which is from trump satva

and trump asatva

says

does buddhism ever explain how animals
with little or no mental faculties such
as fish or worms create kama

humans can generate bad karma and be
reborn as such animals but those animals
do not have the capacity to generate the
mental states to leave such existences
it doesn't seem to make any sense that
it is a one-to-one rebirth into a lower
or higher life form a human and fish may
both be animals but a fish

fishes mind or body can't possibly carry
on the karma created by a higher form
of intelligent life
or even that of a deva or asura

dependent origination doesn't seem to
answer how such a jump between realms is
made just sort of arbitrary ideas are
found in the jataka tales

yeah i've thought about this a lot

and um

um maybe i shouldn't mention this but i
will anyway that my father

um

he was a hypnotist and he trained spirit
mediums i guess they're called

channelers or downloaders or something

now

but this was like back in the 60s and
70s

and um

a woman in a trance started uh

channeling

uh a dead vietnamese buddhist monk named

tay singh

who taught some buddhism to my father

apparently he was also my father's

guardian spirit or just a spirit a

disembodied spirit who took a great

interest in my father's life

and uh he just got indignant the dead

vietnamese monk channeled through the uh

the housewife in a trance

um he was just indignant the very idea

that a human could be reborn as a dog

um

yeah and i i have thought about that i

mean it's like a human is very complex

and then being reborn as a worm
or like a an earwig or something it
doesn't make much sense it would be
i mean it is possible i mean
theoretically just

for example

there is a heaven realm called the realm
of the perceptionless brahmas in
buddhist cosmology where the beings
there are just completely unconscious
they're like statues they don't move
so it could be something like that where
it's like your karma just goes dormant
there's just this little spark of
awareness still going

um

so yeah i think just according to the
theory just assuming for the sake of
argument

that the theory is valid

that a human being could be reborn
as a bug or a worm or something

um

yeah i mean it would just mean that i
mean almost all of your karma would just
become

like

uh underlying tendencies anusia just it
would just kind of go dormant

for lack of any opportunity to arise

but a worm being reborn as a human

i mean unless it was just one of those

cases of most of the karma was dormant i

mean it was just a some being that
through some weird
you know some weird fluke you know you
have some higher being through some
weird bizarre fluke you know they die in
a coma or something they're just in a
semi-conscious state very low level of
consciousness when they die that could
move to the next life which might be an
animalistic one or something
and then finally they snap out of it or
something

um

but as a general rule

in it's just in general i'm i'm
skeptical of the whole idea of

like humans being reborn as worms and

vice versa

um there are

stories of

lower animals that uh had

you know had a lot of merit you know

like there's the famous jataka story of

the fish king in the buddha in previous

existence was king of the fishes in this

pond

and the pond was drying up in a drought

and so this fish king

made some

assertion of truth

and i don't remember what the assertion

of truth was but it's by the by this

truth you know may it rain and then it

was this rainstorm and so he the fish
king saved his school
of fish

um you know through he had essentially
human intelligence and if you read the
jaundice stories you know all these
animals had human intelligence and could
talk and so forth

and uh there is a story of the frog who
went to heaven

um what is it manduka

is that how you say frog in pali

the manduka deva

um where the buddha was giving us a talk
and there are a lot of people gathered
around

and there was a frog sitting there
and the frog would just
it was he didn't understand what the
buddha was saying but it was just like
the the calmness and serenity
and just the the melodious tones of the
buddha's voice caused the frog to feel
like uplifted in this primitive little
way you know it was feeling this little
froggy exaltation or something
and then i think it was a shepherd who
had a stick
with i mean not on purpose just purely
accidentally just moved his stick and
crushed the frog right when the frog was
just listening intently to the sound of
the buddha's voice and that was enough

merit that the frog wound up in heaven
um as a deva

uh but i mean these are just stories

so i didn't need to get back to this

question from trump asatva

and see does buddhism ever explain how

animals with little or no mental

faculties create karma well they would

create just very

crude you know little little little

karma because they got such a small

consciousness you know they've got such

a small mind that only they can only

make small karma

um

so yeah they create karma and it's just

more like ignorance and and craving and
fear

um with regard to like a an insect i'm
skeptical that they even really have
perceptions

really i mean they might have some kind
of

feeling like waiting up

but uh whether they actually form any
kind of very simple little concept about
it you know sanya perception i'm very
skeptical even of that

but i'll just continue with this

question here humans can generate bad
karma and be reborn as such animals yeah
maybe

but those animals do not have the

capacity to generate the mental state to leave such existences but like i say i mean if they were a human in the life before they were the bug you know they got they did something really bad got reborn as a bug you know they died you know just completely zonked out on on heroin or something so that they had almost no mental states going when they died

um

because really i think you know well then they could go back to being human again because they'd have all this latent karma so that's a possibility and according to buddhist philosophy i mean

we've been all up and down the scale
you know forever and ever you know just
from the beginning this beginning of
samsara

it's just been you know we've been up in
heaven we've been down in hell we've
been animals ghosts you know monsters
whatever

so yeah there could be just a lot of
latent karma

lurking around even in bugs some of them
anyway but i mean i am skeptical of that
i've i've come across some heretical
theories

that um

actually do kind of make more sense to
me like i read this really weird book

called seth speaks

where this channeler jane roberts is

supposedly channeling this

multi-dimensional being called seth

and seth was saying that

um

sometimes accidentally but if you're

more advanced it can be deliberate you

can just deliberately split off some of

your own karma to create a new smaller

being you know like a dog or something

so that's a possibility um but let's get

back to the question i'm i'm digressing

from this question it doesn't seem to

make any sense there's a one-to-one

rebirth

into a lower or higher life form a human and fish may be both be animals but a fish's mind or body can't possibly carry on the karma created by a higher form of intelligent life or even that of a deva or asura dependent origination doesn't seem to answer how such a jump between realms is made just sort of an arbitrary ideas

are found in the jataka tales yeah so i guess i mean staying within the realm of of orthodoxy i would say you know

it would sort of be like getting a bad rebirth as a bug might be like

um getting a good rebirth as a

perceptionless brahma it's just there's there isn't much mentality going on

which would just mean that most of the
karma is just dormant it's like a nucia
or underlying tendencies that never have
an opportunity to arise partly because
you just don't have a brain
to even like conceptualize or form the
volition or whatever

so i mean

and because all beings have just been up
and down the scale according again

according to orthodox theravada buddhism

then uh pretty much

every

bug out there would have this baggage of

having been a god you know a zillion

gajillion world systems previously or

some such

so yeah that would be how i would answer

it

uh

with regard to orthodox buddhism and i

mean if you deviate from orthodox

buddhism then it's all bets are off you

know it's like no rules

um

but yeah i have been fairly skeptical of

the very idea that a human being could

be reborn as a worm except for in very

very rare

uh circumstances you know there could be

something like that going on

um

yeah if a worm was reborn as a human

without the the baggage of

you know an infinitive of past lives

then uh

a very loud car is going on going behind

me

um i mean it would just be like a

severely

brain damaged human being and i have i

actually met a person like that in burma

who i mean he was essentially like a

plant

i mean he was his eyes were open he was

kind of conscious

but i mean he couldn't really feed

himself or he certainly couldn't talk he

didn't seem to be aware

of my existence you know it's just like
the eyes are open but it's just like
this blank look you know it's just
so i mean a worm being born as a human
might be something like that on top
i think i should just move on to the
next question

also from trump asatbah

and trump assatba

in trump asata's next question says will
you ever start a live suta study group
on discord and yeah that's
really

i should i mean not necessarily live
suta study but just any kind of live
you know sort of group discussion and i
mean possibly there could be suta study

or something

going on but uh yeah people have been

asking me this for

possibly a year now

and it's just

i'm just lacking the the uh the momentum

you know it's like inertia or something

it's like trying to get

you know there's people all over the

world

and so trying to get like the right day

the right time and everything is uh is

daunting

but um

it seems like saturdays would work best

it used to be sundays but now i've got a

lot going on on sundays

so

yeah maybe

um

god i'm sorry i'm still saying maybe but

um i think just uh even just a live

group

would be a good start

and really i mean you guys should just

get on my case

seriously you just come to south

carolina and kick my butt to get me to

do this this might be what it takes

and i i do apologize i've been living in

kind of strange

um you know ever since i stopped being a

monk all of a sudden my life is just

radically different than it was before
with all these new
uh duties and obligations and
distractions and so forth
but i do agree it would be a good idea
if we had a
live groups
on discord
maybe
two or three different
times or days just so that people who
live in different parts of the world
will have
you know people that have a certain work
schedule at least they'll be able to fit
in one of them

or something

so

yeah

just keep keep pestering me and until i

do it and then i'll do it

all right just move on to the next

question from trump assata

and this one is something i won't be

able to answer very well sorry to say

what are your impressions on the life of

anagarika dhammapala

i found him to be very inspirational yet

he is rather unknown in the west do you

think his model of the anagarika

or the just homeless one perhaps

omitting the money handling could be a

good model sort of like the

tradition in tibetan buddhism sort of
monastic sort of layperson
wanderer but not wholly bound to the
restrictions for full ordination
yeah i've i've read a little bit about
anagarika dhammapala he was
a friend of
colonel alcott and maybe madame
blavatsky in sri lanka
so anagar kadamapala he was a a sri
lankan person
and
it may be that
especially in sri lanka where
the
monk hood is very it has had a long

reputation for being very relaxed and
kind of corrupt

so it may be that he was sort of just
taking his own route

or maybe he just had enough integrity to
know or to realize that he didn't want
to follow all the rules and so he called
himself an anagarika or a homeless one
and wore white he wore like white robes
and uh

he was uh

instrumental in the founding of the
mahabodhi society

he did have some influence on
the theosophists the early theosophists
i'm not sure if he was

um

communicating with like

tw risk davids

like the

some of the pioneers in the the polytech
society

um

but uh he

he was instrumental in

sort of

bringing awareness of buddhism to

westerners even though mostly he lived

in sri lanka and india

but india was a british colony in those

days so there was a lot of english

spoken there and quite a few english

people there

so

um

do i think his model of the anagarika
perhaps omitting the money handling
would be a good model

well

i think money handling might be pretty
much unavoidable since even relatively
strict monks in the west

um you know they're breaking pretty much
the same rules as the monks who are just
handling money just because i mean as
i've said before if you tell someone
what to do with money it's the same as
you handling yourself you're just
handling the person who's handling the
money and even just consenting to having

the money kept on your behalf
is is already against the rules you're
breaking the same nisa gia pachidiya
rule

so i mean i found as a monk a relatively
strict one that the only way not to
break the money rules it just had
absolutely nothing to do with it
just live in some remote
area that's just poverty-stricken
you know in
asia
and um
then you can get along without money but
aside from that especially in the west
it's it's uh

it's very difficult

and i don't know if anyone fully

succeeds

in uh

following the money rules in the west

although at least they're they're making

like a gesture of not handling it even

though they're consenting to somebody

else paying the bills for them um

you know at least they're not handling

it themselves so i mean they are making

an effort i'm not really trying to diss

them because i mean i was the same way

as a monk

um

i wasn't handling the money but um

you know you just pretty much consent to

letting somebody else handle it for you

so

i kind of digressed on that

um

yeah i mean i've been talking about this

sort of thing for a long time because

as i just keep saying over and over

again terra vada buddhism

and the rules of monastic discipline for

theravada buddhist monks

and nuns

is designed for ancient north indian

culture so it's like the ganges valley

in iron age

and it just doesn't fit western society

and you could argue that well that's

fine because you're supposed to renounce
society anyway

but i mean you're still going to be
living in the in the country
and participating in the society at
least on the edges

and even that is very difficult
so

i don't know i think just wearing the
wearing the robes you know wearing white
robes instead of brown ones or yellow
ones or whatever

um yeah i think even that i mean you're
still essentially wearing a toga
which is uh

probably not the best way of going about
it like buddhist monks they were wearing

essentially the same clothes as everyone else

in ancient india they just dyed them because the lay people usually wore white and they'd have it uh cut into pieces and sewn back together again if it wasn't just rags that were sewn together

so there was there were those differences but i mean the style of clothing pretty much everybody was wearing the the same stuff so i mean if you tried to

modernize

um theravata buddhist renunciation for the west

again i just i'd probably just go with
you know like army surplus or or just
gray sweats something like that

um

let's see here

yeah and again i mean like anagarika

damopala

which is kind of acknowledged

as i mean it's part of the the theravada

buddhist system in burma they have uh

anagarikas that wear white and they uh

they only keep eight presets

um and usually it's just

little kids sometimes they're like

toddlers

and uh they're the ones that handle the

money at strict monasteries you know the

little kid will just you know get sent
to the store to get something which is
still against the rules but

so yeah i was i was one of these

anagarikas as a monastery attendant

before i was ordained as a monk i were

like a white sarong and like a white

sweater

so

i wasn't wearing a toga anyway

and uh i was handling the money and

driving the monks and and

helping to serve them food and so forth

so i mean that would be one way of

fitting it in

without deviating from established

tradition

but having like entire monasteries

composed of these anagarikas or

um

just an entire community of them that

would be

interesting i've never heard of that

before

so

yeah i mean it would be something to

look into just uh study up

what you know the duties of an anagarika

are

and uh it would be already established

within teravata it's been around for

probably

centuries

um

otherwise i mean you just be like

breaking new ground and

starting your own system of navigator or

whatever you want to call it with you

know

quasi-semi monks in in gray sweats

or or whatever you know army fatigues

maybe although that might be a little

too violent for

the people who are definitely into

non-violence and compassion and you know

everyone has to feel good and so far

but i mean it would sort of

rouse somewhere sort of the dharma

warrior mentality which might be a good

thing

but i do think it would be important

to have the blessing of

the ordained tarabata buddhist sangha

that they would have to be involved in

order in order for these people to be

calling themselves tarabata buddhists

um it would be good at least

to have the approval

of a theravada buddhist sangha

and so they wouldn't be calling

themselves ordained monks because they

wouldn't be

and they shouldn't be because they

wouldn't be following you know all these

rules that were designed for ancient

india some some of the rules they'd

follow you know no lying no drinking
alcohol that sort of thing

but um

probably not all of the rules and some
of the rules wouldn't even be necessary
anymore like why you wouldn't even need
a rule

um you know forbidding the use of
an ohms bowl made of a human skull for
example

so let's see

with regard my impressions on the life
of anagarika dhammapala as i said i
really don't know that much about him
i've read a little bit about him like
you know his his influence on early

buddhism and the early theosophists and
that sort of thing

so he was much more of a big deal 100
years ago than he is now

but uh

yeah it is it is something to look into
and uh

i don't think the white robes i mean if
you're gonna deviate from
strict

monastic discipline you might as well
just bag the togas because really they
stick out like a sore thumb i mean if
you want the mystique you know you want
to look mysterious and uh you know
exotic

maybe wise you can do that but um

i don't think it's really necessary and
that's not the way it originally was so
i'll just move on to the next question
and this is from the arya swasti project
and this is kind of a naughty question i
think

so but what the hell people are allowed
to ask what they want to ask here

so the aria swasti project says

there is an abundance of documentation

from a certain and i got to put my

put my glass down from a certain

religious group that they have designs

to take over earth in its entirety this

small ethno group is hell bent on doing

so and has been wreaking havoc

especially among the european and
western nations for hundreds of years
there is no debate on the goals and aims
as you can hear it for yourself
they have been known to be behind many
marxist communist satanic lgbt movements
in my belief
they are behind the subversive movement
called christianity
for years for years and desire to
destroy the west which they term
amalek

my question is as buddhists how should
we handle such knowledge
there has to be some remedy when someone
is trying to literally kill you and your
people off the face of the earth

everywhere they appear misery follows
i'm not overstating this they purposely
create friction wherever they are
talking is only getting us so far how do
we extricate ourselves
from such an evil bunch of usurpers that
wish nothing but ill will on the entire
earth
is this our karma what did the buddha
say about handling enemies much respect
warm regards sadhu
so he doesn't mention he was talking
about and uh my only conclusion here is
that he is insinuating that it's the
jane's
or maybe the amish

but um

let's see here

i believe they are behind the subversive
movement called christianity

yeah well

see

my question is is buddhist how should we
handle such knowledge well i mean from
the buddhist point of view

i mean it's just

the nature of samsara that it's always
going to be messed up

you know that's why we're here is

because we're messed up

and our karma is kind of messed up

some of our karma is very messed up

and there's just always going to be

stuff that's i mean presumably this

group that he's

referring to did not exist in the

buddhist time in in india

maybe you know some

merchant or something came through but i

mean there was no appreciable

uh influence

but i mean there was always i mean there

were like

cannibals and like

like robbers infesting the forests that

would kill people or grab them and sell

them into slavery or something and

uh kings i mean on the list of the bad

things that you had to be careful of you

know even above wild animals was kings
which just meant uh you know you had
just warring states in northern india in
the buddhist time
so you had uh it was it was an age of
like expansion there were there were
some old republics
that still were in existence but the
kingdoms were expanding it was like a
time for
for autocratic kings to uh start taking
over and eventually
the king of mughada took over
almost all of india in in ancient times
not long after the time of the buddha
so
i mean there's there's always been this

kind of stuff like uh you know in in the
west

um there's

it's just

take it random pull out of a hat you

know that you've got you know the

christians and the jews in western

civilization since since ancient times

since since the advent of christianity

but before that it was pagans and jews

and um it wasn't just one side causing

suffering to the other there was just

this chronic antagonism going on they

were i mean they were inflicting misery

on each other

there are a lot of you know pogroms you

know anything bad happens the bubonic plague comes along and you know it's the jews poisoning wells and then they'd get tortured and then of course under torture they would admit to poisoning the wells and there you go you got your proof

uh it just it just goes on and in the west it just seems like it's it's just become entrenched as a kind of symbiosis

and symbiosis isn't necessarily positive you know it's i mean you can have negative symbiosis like a dog with fleas the fleas are symbionts they're parasites but still it's symbionts so i'm not saying that one side is is

like entirely

parasitic on the other

but

i mean there's there's just all this

crap that's going on in this world and

the only way you can really

cure yourself

of being stuck in it

is just to detach

and once you're detached it doesn't

matter what you do really i mean it's

it's

as i keep saying over and over again

it's like one of the predominant themes

of these q a's is that

really an action is moral or immoral not

because of the the outward physical
action itself but because of the mental
states that are motivating that action
and so i mean you do what you need to do
some things are very difficult to do
with wholesome mental states like mine
or killing
so you got to be careful about that
but um yeah i mean
everything that happens to us every
every sensation every wadena that we
experience according to orthodox
theravada is the result of our karma
in a way where we're creating our own
world and so you have just created a
world with this uh this group in it
and um yeah i thought about that it's

like

um i've got good enough karma knock wood

that i haven't uh

really

been

adversely affected by say terrorism

terrorist groups that have not blown up

my house or tried to kill me or anyone

close to me

but

i do have bad enough karma there at

least i'm hearing about it i'm seeing

about seeing it in the news and all that

so

i'm creating a world that i'm living in

that that has

badness in it

even though it's at a distance

and uh

yeah i mean it's really it's just a

matter of perception how you perceive

things

like uh

one one

saying of mine that i like

is uh it doesn't matter what it is if

you accept it it's not a problem and it

doesn't matter what it is if you won't

accept it it's a problem and that

doesn't mean even if you accept it

doesn't mean that you have you don't get

to do anything to fix it

like you get a flat tire you accept that

you got a flat tire that doesn't mean
you're just going to sit by the side of
the road or just get out and leave your
car behind just abandon it because the
tire is flat you just accept the tire is
flat now i accept that the thing to do
is to fix the tire
and so you fix the tire with some
modicum of equanimity going
so i mean that's that's as far as i'm
concerned that's that's really
how we have to go about i mean i can't
really like
you know
advocate for the violent revolution or
or some such

so i guess i'm just going to have to uh
stay with stay with that

okay the next question from the arya
sawasti project

is as follows i am reasonably fit and
don't find it too difficult to sit in
meditation posture and uh

you have it spelled mediation which is
the most common typo when typing
meditation because the spell check
doesn't say anything

but i digress i'll just start over i am
reasonably fit and don't find it too
difficult to sit in meditation posture
normally one half hour to an hour and a
half but sometimes i can get incredible
pain in the mid portion of my back i

don't think it's entirely physical
maybe working out psychological issues
or something else your comments would be
welcome on that but my question
would it be counterproductive to take
aspirin or some other pain reliever
before meditation i'm not trying to be a
monk as of now but i also try not to
cheat my progress
by involving something that might create
a false sense or state of mind warm
regards much respect sadhu
well this is just very common the person
experiences pain and meditation
you know usually
it's like knee pain or ankle pain or hip

pain

if you're sitting cross-legged on the
floor for example

um

and yeah i've experienced a lot of back
pain i went to one meditation retreat um
not really very long ago in uh
in california

where it was just pain i mean

it was like the muscles in my back were
just restructuring themselves

because i hadn't been sitting like full
time like that just all day essentially
just walking and sitting walking and
sitting all day

um i hadn't been doing that for a long
time and so my back

muscles and tendons and so forth had to
just take a crash course in in doing
that and it

um

yeah it was it was very painful and i
wasn't taking aspirin at the time i mean
it was only like a two-month retreat
but um and by the end of the two months
i was pretty much adjusted but um
there are really two schools of thought
on this issue

one is like mahasi method uh the old
school mohassy method before the uh
the wimpy westerners really uh
really got their their hooks into it
but it was it used to be that

mahasi sada would teach that pain is the friend of the meditator pain is the key that unlocks the door to nibana and it is really easy to be mindful of pain i mean your your mind doesn't wander away from it very much

uh so i mean there is that

and he was i mean monsieur said it was endorsing heroic effort where even

though the pain becomes so intense that you feel like you're going to die you do not change position you sit for the full hour

or you know however long you're supposed to be sitting

and there are some other teachers i can't remember his name

he uh

let's see what was it called there's

this there's this burmese meditation

method

uh

ingu

the thai ingu method which is kind of a

big deal in the northwest of burma where

i lived for many years and there's this

one seattle

who

i mean you you sit in the full lotus for

like 24 hours straight it's just it's

just insane and

somehow just the the pain of it

and just

having to sit there for for so long

it can like

you know you just kind of phase out into

a like an altered state of consciousness

or something so i mean that's that's a

pretty extreme version of it

but um

on the other hand i really don't see any

problem with uh like taking aspirin like

um there have been times when you know

you're just sitting so much and maybe

wearing the same robe every day that you

start getting like bed sores on your

behind from sitting so much

and um

i mean it just makes sense that you just

you know get a rolled up towel or

something and arrange it a little bit so
it doesn't hurt so bad or i don't see
anything necessarily wrong with taking
aspirin or ibuprofen i mean you want to
probably stay away from the
the heavy painkillers the narcotic stuff
but um

um

yeah i really it's it's just your own
call which which causes you to make the
most progress

i mean if you're able to just watch the
pain then it may be to your advantage
you get a lot of practice just watching
pain it may come really to your
advantage someday when you've got pain

even when you're not sitting
that you know you're able to uh
bear it with equanimity
but on the other hand if the pain is
really distracting or making your
meditation worse then
yeah i mean it probably makes sense to
uh take the aspirin or or whatever
or you know whatever whatever it takes
um i wouldn't totally wimp out and start
sitting in a chair
but uh that's just me
so let's see i'll go back here and hit
uh hit the whole thing here i'm
reasonably fit don't find it too
difficult to sit in meditation mediation
posture normally one half hour hour and

a half that's that's good like um my
legs were never very
um
flexible
and so sitting in the full lotus for an
hour and a half was
that was a challenge
i i've done it but it was you know it's
usually hurting pretty bad by the time
you get to get to an hour or so
but sometimes i can get incredible pain
in the mid portion of my back
incredible pain i don't believe it
that was a joke
i don't think it's entirely physical
yeah well it's

yeah even a broken arm isn't entirely
physical from the buddhist point of view
because it's the it's the fruition of
karma

at least in part

maybe working out psychological issues

yeah your comments would be welcome on

that but my question would be

counterproductive yeah yeah so we're

getting back to

should he take aspirin or not and it

really it's

you know you have to know from your own

experience whether

um just sitting there in pain is

actually being of benefit to you in your

meditation practice or if it's just

derailing it

then i mean you're gonna have to make
adjustments

so i'll just move on to the next

question this is from rob alias dhamma
farmer

so rob says as a trusted and

authoritative figure on theravada

buddhist texts can you please point me

in the right direction so i can find

queer theory in the pali texts

i've never heard of any queer theory in

there so i was intrigued and i think

he's referring to

there are these

like radical lefty

western buddhist academics

um

apparently they're lesbians also

um

and one of them who has written articles
that have

mentioned me in it and just mentioned
you know right wing extremist

buddhism

um

they uh they have like a degree in
buddhist studies and specialize in
uh queer theory

in relation to buddhism

which of course is indicative of their
approach to buddhism

um

yeah queer theory in the polytechnics

uh

you know there is some

mention of homosexuality

to some degree

in the the books of monastic discipline

especially with regard to

um who can and cannot be ordained

according to the rules

and so

uh

it's mainly you have to be a man to be

ordained as a monk and that means you've

got to have a

set of cajones which means you know

trans men you know it's not gonna work

with them they're not gonna even if they
go through the ceremony they're still
not gonna be monks

because it's just they're automatically
disqualified from the get-go

um

but there there are there's like the
intermediate stage of not being fully
male and not being fully female and
that's the pandika

and there's all these different kinds of
pandakas usually it means like a eunuch
you know it's that was fairly common in
ancient times in in certain cultures not
just in india where you know boys would
be castrated before puberty
and they would become

uh

like

prostitutes or

bath house attendants or just slaves

attending the the women

that kind of a thing

and um

there's of course in the polytechs and

the commentaries they're very elaborate

trying to you know systematize and

explain everything

and so

they have lists of different kinds of

pandukas and they've got like the

part-time panduka which

uh could be a bisexual could i mean

um

yeah so

that's about as close to queer theory

as you're going to get i mean there in

ancient times there really wasn't much

of a concept of homosexuality like in

ancient greece and rome there wasn't

much of a concept of homosexuality it

was mainly just you know if you're on

top you're still in the you're still

playing the part of the man

so you can have sex with

eunuchs or or women or or you know

youths

or whatever and you're still i mean as

long as you're on top essentially then

you're still masculine

and uh maybe the ancient india was
similar

there were um

there was a certain unsavory reputation
of you know like barbers

and uh bath house attendants and so
forth

um

but i mean it's it's never really
addressed as a burning issue like it is
all of a sudden
in the west

because i mean it was never really a
burning issue unless it was
you know queers being burned at the
stake by

christians you know like in the middle
ages or something

or not even necessarily christians i
mean muslim i mean no religion

really uh

has

uh really endorses homosexuality or or
queerness maybe hinduism a little bit
you know you've got the gopis you know
the men that are cross dressers at least
um in their in their religious practice
but um

yeah this is kind of a joke question i
think maybe i'm taking it a little too
seriously so i'm just going to move on
to rob alias dhamma farmers next
question

your story about the burmese villager
hating you got me thinking and the story
was uh a few weeks ago in uh on my blog
i just told this story that i'd never
told before of this this villager who
started hating me just because his dog
bit me
and so it really wasn't my fault
i mean i was walking for alms and i had
stopped in front of his house and his
daughter or daughter-in-law
would offer me food every morning that
every morning that i stopped there
and offered relatively good food too
but one day the dog just came out and
bit me and then

because of that his family got kind of a
bad reputation you know people were
asking me way over the other side of the
village you know if i was going for alms
on the other side of the village did
someone so his dog really bite you
that kind of a thing and also i never
saw the dog again so maybe it was
because of the dog biting me that he had
to get rid of her maybe he even killed
it
so

anyway he just started hating me even
though i really hadn't done anything
even after the dog bit me i was just
saying you know don't worry about it
it's okay

you know no problem

so let's see i've completely

digressed from the question here though

your story about the burmese villager

hating you got me thinking i've also met

people in the past who instinctively

hate me without ever saying anything to

them or wronging them could this be the

result of past life karma rather than

just an inability to click yeah sure i

mean as i have already said like at

least twice

anything that happens to you that you

experience

you know any any kind of sensation that

arises according to orthodox theravada

is the fruition of karma

and i'm inclined to go along with that

maybe even to a more

radical degree than orthodox theravada

because i really do not believe in the

ultimately real existence of physical

matter so to some degree we're just

in a simulation we're in the matrix

we're dreaming

whatever whatever you however you want

to interpret it

so

yeah i mean there could be a certain

amount of just randomness sort of

neutral randomness if it's not really

you know getting

um you know really intense on you or

something you know somebody just
just instinctively dislikes you like um
there was one i've been told that there
was one person i want i don't want to
give too many details
because he might watch this
but
i was told that at first he didn't like
me just because i was
like tall or something
and um
but then you know everything's fine now
i mean i i didn't hear anything about it
until we're we're already good friends
so
so yeah something like that i mean

who knows

but yeah if someone is like antagonizing
you yeah that would be the fruition of
karma at least in part

um

i don't know enough about rob

uh alias dhamma farmer here to know i
mean maybe he just has the kind of looks

i mean some people i mean it's like
you know some people just don't like
blonde guys for example not that i'm
insinuating that rob here is one of
those

but um

still sometimes i mean it's just
whatever

maybe just you you walk funny or

you're just wearing kind of glasses that
maybe they their teacher in sixth grade
who hated them

war or something you know it could be
all kinds of weird things but if it's
happening to you then karma has
something to do with it

so i'll just move on to the next
question and this is from mary j

mary spelt m-e-r-r-y

and j-spelt j

what is the penance when you break rules
as a monk

what is that you actually have to do

well that's that's a good question

and with regard to most rules there's

there's

i think it's seven you see the the

highest

you know the most serious rules that you

can break are the paragrika and if you

break those

you don't have to do anything other than

just get the hell out because you're not

a monk anymore you just instantaneously

excommunicated as soon as you perpetrate

the act

so below that is sangadi saysa and i'll

get back to that one that one you have

to you have to do penance for six days

and six nights plus an additional day

and night for every day that you didn't

confess that you concealed your offense

and then below that you've got tulachaya
then you've got pachitia two different
kinds of pachitti you've got nisigia
pachiti and just ordinary pachiriyā then
below that is pati descenia then you've
got a dukata offense and you've got
dewbasita offense and there's only one
dubasi defense which is making a joke at
somebody else's expense
so let's see tula chaya all the way down
to
dubai c top all you do is you make
confession it's just a
you know two monks you gotta uncover
your shoulder you squat down like you
know you make anjali like this

uh the sea the junior monk bows to the
senior monk and then there's just this
formula hambande sabah apatio obikaromi
and then the other monk says
then the first monk says

hambande

and then he'll say what kind of offenses
he committed or

burmese monks just say all offenses you
know they don't really they don't really
admit to anything other than they did
something

and it just goes back and forth it's
just this stereotype formula

and then at the end it's sadhu also

and then they you know that's it and all
of your offenses just miraculously poof

out of resistance and that's the way a
lot of monks see it you break a rule
you just you just squat down with
another monk and do the necessary blah
blah blah and it just
makes the

makes the rules disappear or it makes
the offense disappear and you're in good
standing again which is
very corrupt i think

um as a monk at least i would try to
specify what category of rule i had
broken

and uh i i skipped over the there's one
obscure group of rules called potty day
scenario rules

there's four of them and i mean they're
just very rarely broken
and um there's a different kind of
confession you have to make for those
you just say i committed this potty days
in the offense and you know i i i can
you know i said i confess it so
um with regard to everything below
sangha di says all you have to do is
just make confession with regard to
nisigiya pachidiya rules like
the most common one is handling money
you have to get rid of whatever it is
that you're not supposed to have like
like the money and then you make the
confession so
um you got monks making confession and

for for handling money is is you know
there's it doesn't erase it because you
still got the money after the confession
so you're still breaking the rule
but with regard to sanggari cesar and
there are 13 of them
and some of them are easily broken and
other ones just nobody
i mean it's just not an issue anymore
it's like
an aspect of ancient indian buddhism
that just doesn't arise anymore
um
but um like touching a woman
deliberately because you like touching
the woman

that's one or um deliberately having an orgasm

is is another one that can happen fairly easily especially for young monks

that uh still full of male vitality so to speak

and uh

with regard to those

there's

something like 90 or 100 penances that have to be done for the six days and six nights

and i don't remember all of them some of them are fairly obscure but some of the main ones are you're not allowed to sleep with the other monks you have to live in an outbuilding on the outskirts

of the monastery you have to go in back
of the line you have to sit in back
um you have to bow to every other monkey
it's like you are the junior monk so
long as you're taking this penis you're
not allowed anybody to bow down to you
you're not allowed to uh let's see
uh you're not supposed to be teaching
dhamma when you're when you're doing
this penance

um

let's see what else you have to stand up
whenever another monk approaches you
that kind of a thing you know
essentially you're just becoming the
lowliest most junior monk at the

monastery uh while you're doing this
penance that's essentially what it
amounts to

and then you get reinstated by this
ceremony

of

oh also the most difficult penance you
have to do is you have to make
confession to every single monk that you
come across

every month that you see even if you're
out in the village going for alms you
see a monk there you got to go and make
confession to him

so

that is that's the most difficult part
because if you're a busy monastery

amongst coming and going you know you're gonna you go to make confession to so and so and and you know he took off that morning and didn't tell you so that day doesn't count

so

yeah i mean that's that's essentially what you have to do and then you go through the ceremony with 20 monks in good standing have to all participate and that involves you to be like squatting on your squatting on your knee like

just in a squatting position for a very long time and it can get very painful i have read that the jane ascetics who

would literally torture themselves one
of the their most favorite tortures self
tortures was just to remain in a
squatting position

and if you don't if you don't think it
hurts just stay in a squatting position
just watch you know like a 45 minute
video or something while just squatting
there in front of the tv or the computer
and your

your feet are gonna be burning and
you're gonna be in pain

before half an hour is up

so that that could be one of the most
difficult parts of the whole penance is
just squatting through the long ceremony
at the end

but um as i say most
most rules if you break them all you
have to do is just confess
and um you know they're you're supposed
to confess to a monk that hasn't broken
the same rule um it doesn't have the
same unconfessed offense and so forth
but it's just very corrupt it's it's
really in in thailand even where
whinya or monastic discipline is still
practiced relatively strictly it still
is still corrupt
like the confession they don't actually
say what rules they broke
and uh even if they didn't break the
rules they still confess just

just in case but that's against the
rules also

and uh in in burma they make confession
twice

because the first the second time you
can you're making confession for

breaking the new rule of making

confession to a monk who's broken the
same rule without

not confessing it

it's all very complicated and also the
whole

six days and six nights of penance um in
burma especially

um i can really can't say what it's like

in other countries it's it's gotten so

corrupt that they just do it at night

you know so long as you got a at least a
minute of daylight

then uh that's that's good enough they
just you know take the take the duties
and when everyone's asleep

and you know they can't they don't have
to like humiliate themselves like like a
senior monk like the abbot of a

monastery you know some of them i mean
they're they're so established as the
king of their own monastery they're not
going to go in the back of line they're
not going to get down on their knees and
bow to the junior monks there now it's
just it's just unthinkable it's just a
non-starter

so

yeah there's all this complications and
corruptions and subtleties and so forth
and so

um the short answer what penance when
you break rules as a monk

yeah you just if it's a song of decision
rule that you broke you take the penance
for six days and six nights and you're
essentially the lowest the lowliest monk
the most junior monk at the monastery
and you have to confess what you did
every day to every monk there
and then anything else you just do the
the ritual blah blah blah which uh makes
it poof out of existence so just moving
on here next question is from iz

and iz says hi david what about pp

poopoo gay butt sex games

is there much of it going on among the
monks in asia

is there much of it going on among the
monks in the west what about the ladies

well i'm not sure what ladies here is
referring to is it nuns or is it like
female supporters of the monks i'm not
sure

but um

yeah there there are a lot of gay monks
in asia

i'm not sure about western

probably a lower percentage of western
gay monks but like in in burma

becoming a monk is just a socially
acceptable way of not getting married
and so they're like latent homosexuals
and

um my experience

in burma was that just about every
meditation center in the mahasi
tradition especially will have sort of a
an assistant abbot who is gay or acts
very gay and they they like
the the comfortable places in town like
the relatively well supported
rich comfortable monasteries you know
got rich donors they tend to accumulate
there and they don't like just the rough
forest asceticism stuff very
much

but so with regard to actually
practicing homosexuality i've heard very
little of it i've i've heard more about
it in thailand than i did in burma even
though i lived in burma for more than 20
years and lived in thailand for a total
of maybe three weeks
but still i've i heard more about the
sort of
you know buggery
um which of course causes the monk not
to be a real monkey more he's just
immediately excommunicated just
spontaneously
as soon as he starts the act
as soon as

there's the penetration of the width of
a of a sesame seed

so long as the penetration is you know
like one millimeter or two millimeters
or something that's it he's not a monk
anymore even if you know nobody

nobody else at the monastery hears about
it you know even though he's still
dressed in robes and everything he's
really not a monk anymore

so

yeah it does happen i'm happy to say
that it's not really this scandalous
thing that is running rampant

in terrible buddhism there are a few gay
western monks and uh

i heard this one scandal of a relatively

famous western monk who was uh deported
from singapore i think it was because he
was messing around with

some

laymen there

but still it's relatively rare and even
the monks that are you know attracted to
other males or you know they're just
born that way or or whatever it is
they're they tend to be

late you know the overwhelming majority
are just

you know sort of effeminate monks that
like comfy cushy monasteries and uh
you know they can still be good monks
you know they're

it's like one of my first spiritual
teachers

through books was rom das and he was a
switch hitter he was bisexual

so

they can you know be spiritually

advanced as as well as you know

heterosexuals i assume

um

with regard to the ladies regarding nuns

i have no idea i mean

i really have had very few interactions

with

with nuns either in burma or in the west

you know a little bit you know you meet

them you see them on the bus or whatever

um but i really can't say what the deal

is with them

uh with regard to like female supporters
of monks

then you know lay women yeah that

happens i've heard stories about monks

who were just like serial seducers of

female lay supporters and that kind of a
thing

and so they're they're not

one or two of them was relatively

high level

i mean i've

had a reputation for acting

inappropriately in that regard for a

while but i never excommunicated myself

i never actually went to the extent of

uh

actually seducing

um you know

doing the full course of seduction

so

so to speak

um

so yeah i'd say that it does exist but

it is rare

i'm not sure about

thailand and there were times in sri

lanka like in medieval times when the

monks were so

lacks and and just not following the

rules so unconscientious that uh they

had to restart sangha by bringing in

foreign monks to start doing ordinations

to get real monks again because
um it was just the standard practice um
a few times in the history of sri lanka
or so i've read that monks would just be
getting married and having kids and so
forth and

um but that is nowadays that is rare
even in sri lanka there have been um
there are some reform movements that are
relatively very strict

so it's not like you hear about in
like roman catholicism where you know
there's just hundreds of priests that
are seducing young boys

i heard one rumor in burma of uh a monk
that had messed around with um

an

uh an older novice

who was

of

you know 18 19 20 years old but uh it

was just a rumor

and

i have no idea if it's true or not and

that's the only

the only rumor of that sort of thing

that i ever heard the whole time i was

living in burma

so the burmese are fairly conservative

in certain ways

so i think i'll just move on to the next

question which is from mirror of

emptiness

and mirror of emptiness says are you
familiar with the writings and ideas of
the

controversial monk beku kanyananda

if so what was it that was so

controversial

to many orthodox theravada monks and

what do you think of his views

well

i think i mentioned nyananda

on uh a few shows ago

and i have to admit this is sort of like

uh

the question about um

uh what's his name anagarika

damopala it's somebody that i have a

very superficial knowledge of
and the only thing i've ever read by
nyan ananda is this book
which is one of the most important books
on terawatta that you could read concept
and reality
in early buddhist thought by biku
nyananda
and uh
he was like uh
a teacher at the uh
he taught paulie studies
at the university of sri lanka before he
was a monk i think
so he was an intellectual a scholar and
had some western ideas
and this book really was a

groundbreaking buddhist scholarship it's
an important book
anyone who's serious about
buddhist philosophy and knows you know
the text if you don't know the
difference between the angular and
nikaya and the samyut nikayam then it
might not be for you but
um you know if you know the difference
between the angular and the sun utah
for example you know it you'd know
enough about uh polytechs and so forth
that you could uh
you could gain some benefit from this
and he was simply pointing out that the
the commentarial tradition had

misunderstood the word papancha

for

well over a thousand years you know 1500

years or so

and he was pointing out very

systematically according to the texts

that papancha doesn't mean what the

commentary says it means

so

um that could be controversial i'm sure

there would be a lot of traditionalist

you know reactionary monks who just say

that the commentaries are right like a

lot of burmese monks they'll i remember

once

um i was really not exactly a senior

monk i've been a monk maybe seven or

eight years

and

this

school monk came to to live out in the
forest for a while the same monastery as
me

and i remember he had really rotten
teeth i don't know why i remember that
but he just

came and informed me that he wanted to
teach me

about you know the rules of monastic
discipline and so forth

and it's possible i might have known
more about them than he did but

a lot of burmese monks just assume that

foreigners don't know anything

and so i was just gonna give him some
fair warning it was a little shot over
the bow i'm just saying well you know i
don't think the commentaries are always
right

and he got this grin on his face

and i just

and he just says that's not possible

so a lot of burmese monks they just
think that the commentaries are more
important than the polytechs themselves
to some degree because if if the text
says you know the buddha says blue
but the commentary says when the buddha
said blue what he really meant was red
then if you don't read the commentary

you don't know that that's what the
buddha said

and so the commentaries do work that way
to some degree and this bikunyan and
nanda just kind of cut through that
you know he's he was

traditionalist enough that he was taking
the the polytechs very seriously but he
was

um

in a sense defying the commentarial
tradition you know led by venerable
buddhigosa

and you know that's something that
westerners western monks

probably most western monks really don't

have much use for buddhism

buddhism you know which is just the
commentarial interpretation which is
orthodox i mean technically that is the
orthodox approach to taravana but um
um some of us who have
the capacity for critical thought and
individual

you know we we want to just make up our
own mind about things we don't just
follow along sheep like

then uh yeah we can

we can acknowledge that sometimes the
commentaries are really wrong a lot
sometimes they're just making wild stabs
in the dark they're just guessing and
what they don't fully understand

um like like with regard to
like the flora and fauna and some of the
cultural aspects of north india because
the commentaries were written in south
india and sri lanka about a
a thousand years a lot of it came about
a thousand years after the time of the
buddha
and so they didn't really know what you
know this plant was or or what that
meant because it's just alien to their
culture they couldn't really
in some respects a modern westerner can
make a more accurate or plausible guess
at what words mean than than these
commentators did

but with regard to anything else that
nyan ananda wrote i he's he wrote a few
other things but i think his main
reputation just comes from from this
book

and it's the only it's the only book of
his that i've read it's probably
um the only book of his that most people
that have read him have read
that was the one that really made the
waves so i assume that's why he is
controversial although he may have
written other things that were even more
controversial like maybe in private
letters that got published or something
so
as i say i really don't know much about

him other than you know he was an
academic before he was a monk and he
wrote the book that i read a long time
ago and it's really not even fresh in my
mind right now

so i'll just move on to the next
question from rafi 46

and rafi 46 says do jane's believe there
is a self and the answer to that is yes
they do

that's a fairly simple one

jainism and buddhism are very similar in
certain respects and they do have roots
going back into the same
probably the same indus valley
civilization

that had certain aspects of like
pessimism you know the world is a bad
place of suffering you should try to
escape from it

um

like atheism you know there is no
supreme god in jainism or in buddhism or
in sankhya

which also has its roots

back um at least some roots going all
the way back into the prehistoric indus
valley civilization

um you know they believe in karma you're
supposed to purify your karma in order
to escape from this world of suffering
and so forth it's a common theme
with different takes on it you know

there's different approaches to that in
buddhism and jainism and and you know
yoga sankhya

um

so what the jains believe is that
everyone has

a kind of immortal soul called the jiva
or the it's like life the jiva literally
means life it's like the life force
it's this what they consider to be the
soul

and

karma is like a sticky

almost it's like a physical substance

that sticks to your jiva and weighs it

down so what the jains were trying to do

is to

get rid of all of their karma even the

good karma so that

their their soul would

waft up into heaven

that's that's the short version that's

the reader's digest version of uh

jane philosophy

and uh yeah some of them would just

literally torture themselves by

squatting for example squatting for

prolonged periods of time

um you know eating maybe once a week

not probably not as a continued practice

but

maybe for a while

um

some of them would go naked some of them
still go naked

and i wondered i mean northern india
especially in the buddhist time it got
down to about freezing in the coldest
time of year and it turns out they smear
themselves with mud to survive
survive the winter

because

really they own nothing they don't own a
begging bowl or clothes or anything they
just own zero property other than just
their own

smelly carcass

but yeah ravi 46 the the jains do

believe there is a self it's called the

jiva

so i'll just move on to the next

question this is from loki

and loki says what would be the best

introductory what would be the best

introductory book or books on primordial

buddhism ideally those which entail

practical exercises as well as

cosmological components

well that's a good question

what is the

introductory book on this primitive

archaic pre-terravadon buddhism

personally i would have to say the

sutanipata which is canonical

so

um yeah especially the attica waga read

the antakawaga of the sutonipata and
that is

i consider that to be the most important
buddhist document

in existence

at least that we know of maybe there's
something buried under the ground

somewhere that uh is more important at
least potentially

but it's the largest

chunk of really primitive pre-terror and
buddhism still in existence

so your best introduction to primordial
buddhism would be the the atakawaga in

my opinion without question because

anything besides that uh it's going to

be academic stuff written by
scholars who in all probability aren't
buddhists and haven't lived the life
and they have some really interesting
really brilliant ideas sometimes
but a lot of the time you know they just
have this mind that
um you know a lot of intellectuals are
this way they've got a mind like a
scalpel
and it causes a kind of tunnel vision
you know they they see what they're
looking at really precisely but they
they don't see the big picture
so
yeah the best introductory book on
primordial buddhism is the atakawaga and

it's a mind blower it's well worth
reading anybody should study it if they
want to understand what the buddha
really taught

so i'll just move on to the last
question and the last question is from
deed

and deed asks what do i want for my
birthday

because my birthday is coming up
well i already know a couple things that
i'm getting

i'm gonna get a holster
for a glock

that's nice

um with regard to stuff that i don't

know that i'm already getting i would
like to get a harmonica i wouldn't i
wouldn't mind getting a harmonica you
know a nice one in a versatile key
perhaps

and aside from that i'll probably work
that day

so get a good cake it was my it was the
tradition in my family when i was a kid
i always got rhubarb upside down cake
for

for my birthday but um that is so
esoteric

that um it might not really be plausible
so
um

so with no rhubarb upside down cake

we'll just go for some kind of chocolate
something relatively decadent
and uh just a nice dinner at home
you know hang out with my sweetheart
that would be a good birthday for me i'm
really

not much

into holidays i'm having to get back
into that mode

um

aft now that i'm not only not a monk
anymore but i am engaging in society and
also have uh
a sweetheart

so yeah i mean you definitely don't want
to forget her birthday but um there were

times as a monk you know i'd just be
standing there scratching my head
looking at the calendar trying to figure
out what day it was and then i'd realize
oh wait a minute yesterday was my
birthday or yesterday was christmas
and you know it's just all days are all
days are buddha day

so

but you know i it's it's not that bad of
a of a tradition have birthdays and send
people cards and that kind of a thing so
yeah anyone who uh just wants to
give me a birthday present i wouldn't
mind getting a
it's like i can't slide lock for a glock
19 that it's it's an extended one an

extended slide lock

i think that's what they're called

either just money you know

whatever

but that uh that's essentially what i

want for my birthday i mean really i'm

i'm not

although i'm easy to get stuff for

because up until recently i owned almost

nothing

um

i've already got enough socks and

underwear

and uh

i'm still more or less of an aesthetic

even though i might live a somewhat

luxurious life when i'm not at work
in a non-air conditioned
metal shop in south carolina which is
yeah that's that's an aesthetic practice
right there
but um
some of my life is relatively luxurious
although uh
um i don't really
you know i
my sweetheart's a really good cook but
you know i could eat peanut butter
sandwiches with equanimity too
not that i'm complaining i don't want to
sound like i'm complaining not like i
want to eat peanut butter sandwiches
especially not for my birthday

but i guess that's it that's the last
question

and so uh if you have any questions i'm
very happy to answer them to the best of
my ability i can't promise that i'll be
able to give

an intellectual

or learned answer

especially about some topic or some

person that i know very little about but

uh if you have any questions about uh

buddhism

especially theravada buddhism

uh burmese buddhism

uh just my life living in caves and so

forth

um yes

put them in the comments below

i always uh glean questions from the
comment sections as well as in other
places

if you're on the discord server you can
leave your questions there

if you're subscribed to me on subscribe
star you can leave your questions there
or otherwise just uh in the comments

below this video either on uh

bit shoot or uh

youtube

and all my url links are below

including those from my books for sale
on amazon

and be happy

hello and welcome to episode 30 of
question and answer i am your host pano
basa

and we've got lots of questions here
ranging from very easy to very difficult
and i'm going to do my best to answer
them

and if you have any questions you want
me to answer or at least try to answer
especially if they have anything to do
with

buddhism or theravada buddhism or
burmese buddhism or buddhist monasticism
or meditation buddhist practices
anything like that
anything about me personally feel free

to ask in the comments below

and

i'll do my best to answer and i make no
guarantees that i'll answer it really
well

possibly not to your satisfaction but i
do my best

i'm

gonna do my best this time

so let's just crack open the red bull
and commence

to answering questions

least wise i'm fixing to start
commencing

okay

first question is from bpat427

and i think this one

was asked before the last q a

and for some reason i'm

it's like i missed like three questions

that were asked last time so these are

old questions hopefully he hasn't been

satisfactorily answered by somebody else

yet

so bpav427 says

there's a sub genre of hardcore punk

called beat down

known for its ridiculously violent mosh

pits

if everyone in the mosh pit is engaging

in the violence completely voluntarily

there is no fear of getting hurt in the

whole pit and violent dance moves within

it are a reaction to an extremely primal
and hyper masculine sound

as opposed to intentionally inflicting
pain upon others

what would be the karmic impact of this
question mark

i don't experience a desire to hurt
others necessarily when i go to these
kinds of concerts but it's almost as if
the music triggers a primitive part of
me and it feels

as if i almost have to start swinging my
arms and legs which i assume is what
others feel as well hence why everyone
is doing it so the question embedded in
this

is what is the karmic impact of flailing

around in the mosh pit at a hardcore
punk rock concert

that is the question

and

he kind of answers the question to some
degree

by uh

talking about like the extremely
primitive or primal

um feel to what he's doing and really it
is sort of like a

regression to animalistic passions

um even if you're you have no intention
of hurting anybody still

you're

you're essentially raging

like a wild animal like a like a wild
beast

and the more you do something the more
momentum that creates you know that's
what karma is essentially is just the
momentum of your mental states

and so

by doing this i mean you might not be
making any

uh unwholesome or unskillful karma by
you know deliberately hurting somebody

but still you've got

um this volitional

animalism going on

that is going to

add more sort of violent passionate

animalistic karma which might be right

up your alley for all i know or it might
not but it's uh
something that you would want to
consider i suppose
whether you want to have more
animalistic karma
that
can result in
animalistic
results of that karma fruition
animalistic fruition
so
i think i answered it i'm really not
sure i've never been in a mosh pit
myself
but um i have i've heard stories

a friend of mine in high school went to
a

punk rock concert one band was called
the maggot brains they had like one one
drum set and three bass guitars and no
no lead guitar and they were so awful
that

some of the

audience rushed the stage and
threw the singer off the stage and he
was on the floor getting his head kicked
but

not all punk rock bands or not all punk
rock concerts are like this i am sure so
i think i'll just move on to uh

bpap 427's next question this is a more
recent one

have you been running any drills with
your glock

what firearm would you like to purchase
next so i guess that's two questions

i haven't really been running any drills
with my glock

um i did get a holster recently for my
birthday in fact i got two holsters this
is one of them right here it's very nice
handmade

by a

proud confederate down the
road um

so the only drills if you call them
drills at present is i'm just practicing
just target shooting it hasn't gotten

any farther than target shooting i'm not practicing quick draw or anything like that yet

i haven't uh even started

really applying for the uh

concealed carry permit when you got to go through some kind of training course in south carolina

so that's about it just just a bit of practice shooting

and uh i could use an improvement i'm really not the best shot

with with the pistol i used to be a really good shot with a rifle but um not so not so good with a pistol

and uh anyway see the next question here is what firearm would you like to

purchase next um i'm not really planning
on becoming a collector my father was a
gun collector i got a 22 rifle on the
day i was born

he had uh something like 40 to 50 rifles
and shotguns just a a few pistols

but

what firearm would i like to purchase

next

maybe

a pump shotgun

you know like a mossberg or something

maybe

and i haven't really given it much

thought um

getting another another firearm is not

really high on my priority list right now and as i say i still need to practice with the the one pistol that i've got

so i think i'll just uh move on to bpat427's next question

and my answer to this one may be equally unsatisfactory but uh such as life

he says do you know of any reputable terravotta monasteries in eastern washington the spokane area that you could recommend to someone

um honestly i don't know of any monasteries reputable or otherwise in the area of spokane washington i assume that the very least there's

some kind of asian temples there maybe i
don't know what kind of immigrant
community spokane has i've never been to
spokane

i was raised in western washington but
spokane is way over by idaho
on the east

so i mean of reputable terrible
monasteries there's supposedly one
um technically in eastern washington but
it's down by the oregon border like on
the on the banks of the columbia river
that's in ajahn chah tradition and then
there's one that was started by ah john
tanisero like 10 years ago or a little
less

it's

i think it's in the north cascades area
somewhere

so they're both in washington state but
they're quite a ways from uh
from spokane

and also there's birkin in uh
uh british columbia a little bit north
of vancouver that uh is reputable it's
it's very reputable

but um aside from that i really can't
recommend any monasteries

tarawata or otherwise

in eastern washington because i really
am unfamiliar with the monastery scene
in eastern washington
or idaho for that matter

so i think i'll just move on to the next
question with all

all due respects

and uh see be pat's last question here
is have you done any traveling to other
eastern u.s states since relocating to
south carolina

well

um

my sweetheart and i have made a couple
trips to uh virginia to pick up her
mother when she came to visit us

so we've just taken road trips
through

um

parts of north carolina and tennessee

and and virginia i don't know if we hit
any uh

no i don't think we hit west virginia at
all although uh we are planning around
the end of august

to go on a trip to ohio

we're going to take a road trip
in a

car with good gas mileage

and drive up to ohio where my sweetheart
was

was born and uh where her mother still
lives and

maybe uh riding boats on lake erie or
something

so um yeah we're gonna hit all the
states between here and

and ohio i suspect

so

yeah i was never really heavily into
traveling i just really didn't much see
the point of it when i was younger
and then um around the time i became a
monk

i just started traveling a lot and just
um

this force of circumstance had me going
to places i never thought i was ever
going to go to

including japan been to japan three
times

so

yeah i'm kind of uh

um

i've been kind of a homeless wanderer
for a long time although those days i
think are over

and uh

i work full full-time so

i'm not um

having lots of time off or traveling
but i would i would like to uh visit
georgia where my father was born and
raised

um

northwestern georgia around

mount berry mount berry georgia

so that that's uh kind of on the on the
list of places to go to

so uh yeah

i think i answered that that was an easy
one that was easy

so i'll just move on to the next

question which is from alfred

and this one's kind of uh

kind of an interesting

spicy one maybe

when a person is in a lifelong

relationship and your spouse is not

interested in sex anymore he's got sex

capitalized capital s

when your spouse is not interested in

sex anymore what would be the right

approach

resorting to masturbation or becoming a

celibate

often

um this is he sort of elaborated on this
often when you are in a relationship for
a long time some women shut up shop and
leave you in the lurch so to speak

if you want to clean your plumbing it
creates a problem

hmm well from the buddhist point of view
if you're able to be celibate you should
be celibate i mean that's

um

i mean there is a pseudo where the
buddha says you know if you can become a
monk become a monk if you can't become a
monk then at the least
avoid sex like you're avoiding falling
into a deep hole with like red hot

glowing embers at the bottom

and if even that's too much at the very
very least

stay away from the wives of other men

so

yeah masturbation is certainly

preferable to uh

uh becoming a

a philanderer

so to speak

so

yeah i mean if you just want to be like

orthodox buddhist

um

yeah celibacy would be preferable to

spanking the puppy so to speak

um but i mean it's just not for everybody it's like some some guys they just can't be celibate you know it's like in the bible the new testament where jesus says there are three kinds of eunuchs you've got born eunuchs made eunuchs and those who become eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven and that's people who are uh voluntarily celibate for spiritual reasons and then he says but it's not for everybody and it and it's really not and uh i mean sometimes if a person is celibate for spiritual reasons they're like a starving man just fantasizing about food all the time and

i can relate to this it's i've had this
kind of experience

where

you're celibate

but you're just horny you're just
frustrated

so

at some point you have to

decide are you making more good karma

by being celibate and just being

frustrated all the time or would it be

better just to relieve the the

frustration

with uh

some puppy petting

and uh i mean for a monk it's really not

it's not a good choice to make i mean
celibacy i mean if you don't want to be
celibate then you shouldn't be a monk
obviously i mean monks aren't even
allowed to uh masturbate at least not to
uh orgasm they might be allowed to jerk
but not jerk all the way off
so

i mean one thing you could do is just uh
try to uh persuade
your your mate

um

in one way or another
you know i mean i don't think uh getting
angry and making
you know threats and accusations is
going to help anything but um

i don't know

i think uh you could have some

persuasive power i mean if if she loves

you she might be willing to uh

take one for the team

so to speak this may be not a good way

of saying it

but uh yeah i mean that would probably

be first choice if possible but maybe uh

uh

the person asking the question here has

already tried that multiple times

so he's uh falling back on

something else

so

yeah i mean if it was me unfortunately

it is not

um

yeah i think trying like romantic

persuasion or something would be first

choice

and uh

yeah i mean i'm not a monk anymore so

um

resorting to your own right hand

is uh

i mean there's much worse things you

could do

but um

be faithful at any rate

so

i hope i answered that one i don't want

to wallow with it i don't want to wallow

in this one

um not that it's a bad question or

anything i mean it's probably applicable

to a great many

men yes especially in the west it's

weird how

it used to be

if you wanted to have sex with a woman

um

i mean you resort to a prostitute or

some floozy in a bar or else you'd get

married and it was like traditionally

women

would have sex

after marriage but not before or very

little before whereas now it's like the

opposite in in america or in the west
women have sex more before they get
married

so i mean

quite a few married men have made
comments to this effect

um

with regard to uh i mean like in
communications with me it's like
just if you want to be celibate just get
married

but um

yeah

so that is it is kind of a weird
situation in the west that women will
have sex
more before they get married and then

after they get married it's like well i
don't have to do that anymore

in fact uh

i heard a joke today it's like why are
women always smiling in their wedding
pictures

is because they're happy because they
don't have to give oral sex anymore
this is not fair

so um

i think i'll just move on to the next
question i'll just sort of sneak away
from that question

and the next question is from robert

and robert says

for a long time i had this theory that

the universe is just god split into
trillion individual consciousnesses so
when you suffer it's really god's
suffering and when you're happy it's
really god who's happy in that scenario
there is no real you and me but only god
who alone has consciousness a sort of
panentheism

god experiencing itself through us any
thoughts on that

um

yeah it's

i mean some religions do teach that like
vedanta

teaches that i mean

we have a soul or an atman but everybody
shares the same one and it's essentially

god

but there is

i think from well from a buddhist point

of view obviously there is no god so

this this would just be academic

but um

yeah i can i can understand how you

could say

that

you know ultimate reality is just

infinite formless consciousness

but the thing is if it's formless

consciousness

then all the happy and unhappy would be

an illusion because they would be forms

supposedly

existing in the formlessness but it's
really just like a virtual existence
sort of like in buddhism you've got
dependent co-arising padiccha samupada
which

nagarjuna claimed to be the same as
emptiness

which means there is no

no

ultimate reality

to like a multiple phenomenal world

so

the happy and unhappy

uh

god

i mean ultimately the happiness and the
unhappiness would be an illusion but god

would contain the illusion so it'd be
like

um

maybe like a book containing
a description of happiness or
unhappiness but ultimately there's no
happiness or unhappiness there it's just
these

uh symbols that are
represented or interpreted as happiness
unhappiness

so

i mean if you want to reify
ultimate reality as infinite formless
consciousness which
vedanta does and i think quite a few

christian mystics also have done

then

still whether

god is experiencing happiness or

unhappiness as something real

um

is is debatable

and uh

in a way they it kind of does because

you know the phenomenal world is sort of

kind of conditionally real you know it's

not just total absolute unreal because

it has to be based on something

but um

yeah it's it's going back to like the uh

the simile of the block of marble where

you know you've got this one block of

stone

which

you know it's it's not near anything

else so we can say that it's essentially

sizeless and inside that block of stones

every single possible statue and so you

can have like joyous statues or statues

of beings that supposedly are joyful

others that are sad you know the dying

gall or something

and um

i mean it's just sort of

not really i mean every single molecule

in each statue is already there you know

you just have to dismiss the extraneous

rock

but still to say whether there's like
you know happy people and unhappy people
are happy anything or unhappy anything
inside inside the rock is uh
you know it's it's just sort of a an
enigma or or something
and

i would say that ultimately it's not
real the happiness and the unhappiness
unless you get to like the the ultimate
happiness of nirvana or you know the
sachitananda

of um

of the hindus where just god is in the
state of just total bliss

no problems no worries that kind of
thing

and uh

this also i think was a question that i
somehow

overlooked last time as was alfred's
question

and i think this next one also might be
one that

um it was on minds.com it wasn't in the
usual place for people asking questions
and so

before i uh i do one of these q a's
q's and a's

i i just go through all the usual places
where the questions are asked you know
underneath the uh in the comments under
the videos and

the discord server and and my subscribe
star page

and uh i compile the list and

sometimes the questions are asked in
unusual places

or they're asked very late

just right like right around the time

i'm doing the video and uh

i don't see them

so anyway this question is similar

and uh it's asked by priyapistic monk

and uh priapistic monk says in your

opinion after all that you have done

accomplished and have obviously become

what makes a monk

with mutual respect of course what makes

a monk

that is the question

and um

i mean i can only speak from experience

with regard to uh taravana so what makes

a beku

maybe would be uh

the question i'll answer and i mean

technically speaking a monk or a like a

beku a terabotta buddhist monk is

someone who is

qualified to go through a 20-minute long

ordination ceremony and has gone through

that 20-minute ordination ceremony and

has not done anything to

excommunicate himself

or just hasn't dropped out hasn't

declared his weakness

and dropped out

and uh technically i mean that's that's

what a beku is

um there's a chapter in the dhammapada

about the beku

which uh

it kind of redefines the term like in

early buddhism

the buddha would uh

in in the text of early buddhism the

buddha would redefine certain terms like

brahman you know he just defined it as a

genuinely holy person not just someone

who was born into the brahmana cast

or see what other ones he redefined a

number of terms

and um

i mean he kind of did that to bhikkhu
also or then again in in buddha's own
time he

he would just say come on

and that would be it i mean the person
would be ordained

so

there was no 20-minute ceremony in the
buddhist time

so i mean if you want to be more
sort of poetic

or metaphysical or something then i mean
a good monk you know like you could say
that a true monk is a good monk and that
would be you know all of the things i

said before you know the person who's
gone through the ordination ceremony and
is you know still in good standing and
all that and who is like sincerely
conscientiously trying to
follow the instructions given in the
terabyte of buddhist texts you know he's
trying to follow the rules
and trying to meditate and you know
control his mind
or at least
observe his mind and understand his mind
and uh
yeah i think that would be the answer to
the question so i'll just move on to the
next one and this is from mary spelled
m-e-r-r-y

and this is kind of a tricky one
sort of like the is god happy or unhappy
one up above
and it's could you maybe describe what
first jhana feels like
and this is kind of a tricky question
first of all because jhana itself is
somewhat controversial different
meditation instructors
or you know let alone scholars who have
never experienced it but even meditation
instructors who are some rather
accomplished may not agree on exactly
what is and is not jhana and i have
pointed out numerous times
and have gotten some

sort of disgruntled feedback over it

that um

most of what is considered jhana not all

of it but most of what is considered

ghana in burma

is in my opinion self-hypnosis it's like

a hypnotic trance

and

a lot of burmese meditation instructors

are not sophisticated enough to tell the

difference between hypnosis and genre

and there is a difference in my opinion

so first jhana

what it feels like

i mean if i was a monk i couldn't even i

couldn't even answer this question

because monks aren't allowed to admit to

having attained jhana to lay people or
like in public

because technically jhana is considered
to be a superhuman mental state and this
is

suspicious to me

because

for example in uh the mahasari

which is the essentially the bible for

we pass in the meditators or this monk

or people who practice we pause in a

meditation i'm not just talking about

the goenka method i'm talking about like

mindfulness meditation

um

it's like the bible and it defines

some asamati or right concentration as
the four genres

so it's kind of strange that right
concentration would i mean you have to
have a superhuman mental state

in order to have right concentration
although it is the last on the list of
the full path and everything else
culminates in this

this right concentration

so i mean maybe

but just going with the text

in first jhana which is the first is
like the the the lowest level of genre
or absorption it's called in english
sometimes

you're still able to think

so you might still even be like labeling
at this point

you know in breath out breath or
touching

like the breath touching the nostrils as
it goes in and out that sort of thing
and

what it would feel like

um is you're just like in a groove your
mind isn't wandering anymore and it
feels good you're just solid

and then it can even cause pt or like a
kind of

pleasurable interest or

or enthusiasm to arise

and it just feels really good because

your your mind is like on point

and you can still have

um some kind of thinking action going on

but it's like meditative thinking you

know it's the the thinking that is

required

to do that meditation

and um when you get to second genre you

stop thinking

but first john you can still think

and so that's that's essentially what it

would be you're just in a groove it's

it's it feels good especially if you

haven't if you're not used to it yet i

mean if you're not used to it yet i mean

you can just be like twitching and

jerking your muscles will be like

kind of spazzing out on you a little bit
just because
in my opinion
it's like your mind has got so much
energy going as a general rule you know
you've got this hyperactive mind that
when you finally calm it down
it's like the habitual energy doesn't
have the usual avenues of of expending
themselves and so they they manifest
themselves as like twitching muscles and
so forth
or just the rushes of euphoria and so
forth
but uh getting back to the question
before i move on to the next one

what first jhana would feel like would
essentially be just you're meditating
really well your mind is not wandering
maybe if it starts to wander you it's
just you catch it immediately and you're
just in this groove you know you're just
doing really well in your meditation
so i'll just go on to mary's next
question

and this one is entirely different and
now for something completely different
are there many big spiders in burma i'm
afraid of them and don't like them
big spiders

well yeah there are

big spiders in burma

but the most common big spider i used to

call them hand spiders sometimes they're
wall clingier spiders i mean they
weren't really as big as my hand i got
big hands

but

they're pretty much all over and they
just stick to the wall usually head down
and they just stay there and wait for
something to come close and then they'll
zip out and get it and they're like arch
enemies with the little wall geckos

it's kind of sad the wall geckos usually
win so you'll see this wall spider
sticking to the wall it might have like
one leg on one side and two legs on the
other side because the geckos keep from

biting their legs out

but um there when i first came to burma

i first went to this

uh

forest monastery in the wastelands the

blazing hot wastelands of central burma

and now it's put into this little cabin

and on the wall was one of these big

spiders and i didn't know what they were

you know i knew it was a spider but

um

i didn't know if they were bitey or not

bitey and i could not sleep that night

until i caught the spider cars monks

good buddhist isn't supposed to just

squish them so i'd have to catch it like

in my home's bowl or something and let

it go outside

but then uh

i learned over the years that they are
really completely harmless

i never really got bitten by one despite
the fact that they're ubiquitous

and the closest i ever got to being
bitten by one of those wall clinger

spiders was i was taking a shower and

the way people take showers in burma is
pretty much the same way people were

taking showers in ancient india

thousands of years ago which is you've
got a tank of water and you got this

bowl and you just scoop the water up and
pour it over your head

and one of those spiders was trying to
get away from the flood by climbing up
my leg

and i think it just took its they're
called the pedops you know like these
two little short legs in the front that
spiders have not the fangs but on the
outside of the fangs it just kind of
tried to dig in to keep from getting
washed off my leg that was the closest i
ever gotten to being bitten by one
although there are a kind of i can't
remember what they're called i can't
remember the burmese name for them but
um

they're uh they're like a tarantula like
a small tarantula and they apparently

bite but it's it's not really dangerous
it's sort of like a
i don't know like a wasp sting or
something maybe probably not even that
bad
um
but
i spiders don't really bug me i some
spiders i even like
like uh like those wall cleaner spiders
i just named them all lloyd
they're all named lloyd
and um
yeah there's there's some kind of gross
looking ones like the ones that
are camouflaged that look like bird crap

you know they're kind of gray and
mottled and spiky and ugly i don't like
that kind

but um

enough of spiders i suppose i mean
there's lots of spiders in burma but uh
i never really got bitten by one i was
stung by scorpions on several occasions
but never bitten by a spider
bitten by ticks which i guess are
arachnids but

that's different too so i'll just move
on to mary's next question

how dangerous is living in the forest in
burma in terms of tigers snakes spiders
etc

well

by far the most dangerous animal in the forest in burma is not tigers snakes spiders not even humans who are often considered to be the deadliest animal in the forest but it is the anopheles mosquito

because they are vectors of malaria and way way more people die from the bite of the anopheles mosquito than die from the bite of tigers or snakes or spiders

so

i mean tigers are rare

i did live in a forest that had a few tigers

um

but

i mean they're they're pretty much
afraid of people now because you know
there's

very few tigers left i i've when i was
watching the tiger king series

um it was saying that there are more
tame tigers in america just privately
owned not even in zoos necessarily
that there are more tame tigers
privately owned in the usa then there
are wild tigers left in the world

so

tigers have enough sense to just stay
away from people they figured that
they're bad news snakes

yeah snakes i mean

there there are poisonous snakes in
burma that are way more poisonous than
snakes here

um the most dangerous deadly snake in
burma is not the most venomous

i try to say venomous and poisonous at
the same time

uh it's the the russell's viper and
they're they're just mean

that's why they're the deadliest is
they'll just they'll actually chase

after people sometimes i got chased by a
little baby one about this big you know

it was coming at me like this

it was just trying to scare me off and
of course i'm not going to come closer

to it when it's doing that

but um

yeah there are quite a few russell's

vipers in central burma especially i

guess the deadliest snake in burma is

the many banded crate and you get bitten

by a little baby one like this you know

it just kind of nicks your finger a

little bit and that you're dead

i guess in the vietnam war they were

called the two-step snakes because uh

you uh you take it bites you and you

take maybe two steps before you're dead

maybe if it's a big one but um

uh i almost stepped on a banded crate a

few times it wasn't the mini bandit

crate it was just the regular bandit

crate

um

saw a couple cobras what's um i like
snakes so i'm not really afraid of them
i mean you don't want to step on a viper
of course so you have to be careful but
um if you leave them alone they leave
you alone that's pretty much the same of
any kind of wild animal
unless you know it's some
i don't know aged tiger that's just
gotten used to eating people or uh
you know you wander in between uh a mama
bear and her cubs or or some such but as
a general rule if you leave animals
alone they'll leave you alone

unless it's like mosquitoes or something
then they just come after you

so

how dangerous is living in the forest in
burma in terms of tigers snakes spiders
etc i was actually more afraid of wild
pigs than i was of tigers

when i was really like out in dense
forest

just because

there's more of them

you're much more likely to come across
wild boars

than across a tiger

and uh

i've been told that um you know they'll
just

you know charge up against you you can
get surrounded by a few of them and
they'll be biting your legs until you
fall down and then you're done for them
but um

so when i would be camping
just out in the middle of a forest under
a tree or something i'd always try to
pick an easily climbable tree
to camp under
or something along those lines some kind
of defensible position
up on top of a rock or something
but again i mean the most dangerous
animals in in a tropical forest are the
little ones that carry diseases

as a general rule close plus snakes i
suppose

i was stung by scorpions several times
but uh

it wasn't really a dangerous kind of
scorpio it was just hurt for a while and
then for a few days after that um i
didn't know this at the time but

scorpions have a neurotoxin sort of like
a cobra and so it just makes your finger
go numb and all pins and needles

you know if it stung your finger

for a while and this there are some

giant centipedes that are pretty gnarly
too but

we don't need to dwell on giant
centipedes

but those were ones i i could not sleep
if one got into my cave i was gonna have
to get rid of that centipede before i
could sleep because they're so big i
mean they're big as you know like over a
foot long and big as a baby snake and
they make this

clicking sound when they run across the
concrete floor it's really creepy and
they when they bite i mean it really it
hurts it hurts bad

might not be uh deadly but
it's not good

so i think i'll just move on to mary's
next and last question

what is right livelihood for a layperson

does it involve something more than
keeping

the five precepts and yeah it pretty
much does

um

usually when i do these q and a's
q's and a's

um

i don't like do a lot of homework you
know i don't look it up which maybe i
should

but i'm trying to just uh

you know just rely on you know what i
genuinely know

instead of just looking it up and then
you know looking smarter than i am and
i don't know trying to pass myself off

as somebody who can answer every
question

so right livelihood for a layperson

somewhere in the texts i don't even

remember if it's um a sutta or if it's in
the commentarial tradition

but there is a list i think it might be
in the wii suite maga there's a list of
things that somebody who has right
livelihood doesn't do

one thing i mean you're obviously not
going to be killing anything you're not
going to be stealing anything you're not
going to be lying in your job

so that's i mean the first thing

your your livelihood should not require

you to break the five precepts but then
there are other things like you
shouldn't be dealing in animals for
slaughter even though you're not killing
them yourself
you shouldn't be selling them to
somebody else where they're going to
kill them you shouldn't be dealing in
slaves and that would include like white
slavery so-called
you wouldn't be a pimp
you shouldn't be dealing in toxicants
which would mean no bartenders no
cocktail waitresses
and technically
even a grocery store clerk who's selling
or or like a restaurant waiter or

waitress who are just selling drinks
that would be that would not be right
livelihood

you would not sell weapons
or poisons

which also would hit the grocery store
clerk who's selling the uh you know the
can of insecticide along with you know
the bread and the marshmallows and the
the gallon of milk and all that
and see what else

golly i think that's pretty much it
yeah so you wouldn't be selling slaves
you wouldn't be selling
um you know animals for slaughter
you wouldn't be killing anything

yourself naturally like being a soldier

you know technically

um that wouldn't be right likelihood so

especially if you're like killing people

um

now sorry to all you soldiers out there

i realize that you're you are necessary

for society to uh

to survive in this

state of civilization that we are in

but from the the point of view of

buddhism you are you are uh

um at best you're just sort of the

tragic hero who has to sacrifice your

own

spiritual welfare so that others can

live in peace

but i digress

you know no selling intoxicants which of course rules out not only bartenders but mostly

you know people you know what are they called servers at restaurants and uh you know grocery clerks and so forth and uh

golly

yeah you have to be honest

so

you might not make the best sales person

you know if you're selling used cars

you know yeah it looks really nice i

mean the the

you know one of the cylinders doesn't

fire but it looks really nice
and then they'll just go somewhere else
where they'll get lied to and tricked
into buying the thing
so i'll just move on to the next
question i'm sorry i i don't have the
full list but that's pretty much it i'm
pretty sure i might have i might have
forgotten one or two but i think you get
the idea
you know you get a job that isn't
not only not causing harm but you know
not promoting harm not promoting the
breaking of five precepts you
know so it extends beyond just five
precepts right livelihood does
and for a monk it's right livelihood is

uh

is a little different

you know you're you're not accepting

money at all

and you're not you know giving dhamma a

talks in exchange for something else you

know you're not bartering dhamma for for

for something else you're not selling it

that kind of a thing

and uh you're accepting your alms while

following the rules as conscientiously

as you can

so that you're not your livelihood of

collecting alms

into your bowl

is is right livelihood

but uh i think i'm getting beyond the
question here because it was
specifically about laypeople so let's
move on to the next question which is
from das boot

and dos boots says

if the madness of technocratic control
wins in such a way that every
transaction and every person on the
planet is controlled directly
how will the tradition of retreating
from the world survive

well i mean

genuinely retreating from the world
and just becoming a hermit

um that might still be possible unless
unless you've got like a chip

and implanted into your body and they're
keeping track of you and it's like nope
you're not you're not being a good
consumer you got to come live in town
where we can keep an eye on you
but i mean just going off the grid
should still be a possibility
until we really hit cyberpunk dystopia
and uh i'm obviously we are kind of
moving in that direction but um
directions can change
that's one reason why people predicting
the future
are so often wrong is that people are
not totally stupid and even if they are
heading for a brick wall

um you know they do eventually swerve
not to hit the brick wall

so you can extrapolate oh look they're
heading for that brick wall so they're
gonna hit that brick wall but then

um often just through seeming miracles
people uh

grow a pair or whatever

and uh

avoid

disaster

or at least a really bad disaster so but
i'm i'm just digressing here dos boot is
asking

if the madness of technocratic control
wins in such a way that every
transaction every person on the planet

is controlled directly how will the
tradition of retreating from the world
survive

yeah i mean it would really have to get
really draconian and just like

really i mean even in communist china

now i assume it's possible for people to

just go off the grid if i mean if if

you're completely off the grid i mean

not like the unabomber or something but

if you're just really just minding your

own business as a hermit a recluse out

in the wilderness somewhere as long as

you're not living in a wildlife refuge

or something not breaking some law

then you know even a totalitarian

repressive government

i mean you're not causing you're not
posing any threat to them and so they'll
just

ignore you you know it costs more to
deal with you than just to let you just
live your life

so

yeah i mean it would have to get a lot
worse than now

before people weren't able to just opt
out of society

but with regard to like the tradition of
retreating from the world and like a
monk gosh i mean it's already pretty
difficult now

like in the west in india i assume that

you could still do it in burma you can
still do it

um you know in buddhist countries if
you're in a buddhist culture where
people you know know the score you know
the guy in the brown toga is actually a
holy man he's not just some weirdo
then uh

yeah it's still possible but in the west
it seems to me that
the one of the biggest difficulties of
like

technocratic control as dos boots as it
is is it's like socialism where
people are just getting used to the idea
that poor people should just be taken

care of by the government you know it's
not your own personal duty to help the
poor

or to put alms into a monk's bowl you
know a lot of people like mostly lefties
i think when i was a monk would ask me
why don't you just go on food stamps you
know

what

one just why should people have to go
through the trouble of putting food in
your bowl every morning why don't you
just you know go to the food bank or
something

and i didn't know a monk who uh lived in
a wildlife refuge for a while and uh
walked every morning to a soup kitchen

which is preferable to uh

some government food distribution center

but

still

yeah

the tradition of retreating from the

world and yeah it is it's the world is

getting more

um

invasive or like government and just

business just society is becoming more

invasive where you can't make a stray

off color statement without possibly

losing your job 10 years later because

of it or you know anything you do

practically is is being traced somehow

but going off the grid really does
reduce that i mean i was almost a
non-entity when i dropped out of the
monkey i had zero credit rating just a
zero driving record zero pretty much
anything

so you're invisible so long as you're
off you're like really opting out
so yeah i think it's possible if if
society continues moving
in a direction

you know imitating the chinese communist
party you know if the west becomes like
that also then

um and then just gets like hyper
technological so they can just keep tabs
on everybody then possibly but at

present i think the main trouble is just
people just assuming that you know the
government should just take care of
monks because

you know monks are just another kind of
poor people

so i'll just move on to the next
question also from das

boot and das boot says even now it's
hard for many to do a longer retreat if
they are not embedded in a local
traditional community or order
needing to organize visas

sponsors and so on

well that's not even a question is it

oh wait maybe is this next paragraph is

the next part of it probably direct
support from fellow buddhists will
become even more important but i just
wonder how the whole setup of retreating
will look like if the most dystopian
forebodings play out
well just improve your own karma
and you can dodge the bullet of the most
dystopian forebodings
because i mean
this may not be orthodox buddhism but um
it's my
my understanding
that there are an infinite number of
universes and just our karma is is sort
of
steering us blindly

like like an autopilot

into one version of reality or another

so let's see

uh yeah i think this one will be part of

the same question here gosh this is kind

of a confusing one for me i hope you're

not equally confused out there listening

to this see even now it's hard for many

to do a longer retreat if they are not

embedded in a local traditional

community or order needing to organize

visas

sponsors and so on yeah well with regard

to um some meditation centers in burma

yeah if you don't have inside

connections

um

then you're pretty much limited to the
the famous ones that cater to
um cater to westerners you know like uh
to some degree some of the mahasi places
and uh

would be the main ones i think

so

i mean it's it's pretty much always been
that way i mean you have to rely on a
society that supports that kind of a
thing too

probably direct support from fellow
buddhists will become even more
important

but i just wonder how the whole setup of
retreating will look like

this retreat

in the first question he's talking about
the tradition of retreating from the
world and i assume that was just like
renouncing the world but then in the
next two paragraphs here it's talking
about attending like meditation retreats
so that would be retreat also

it's kind of it's kind of confusing to
me now i'm so confused

let's see

yeah i mean it's it's always been that
way

where you have to have a support system
it might just be the the society at
large if it's a buddhist society then

you know the entire population is is
virtually your support system

so

yeah i mean the only problem would be
if you know the world is taken over by
globalist you know technocratic
communists

and like they're totally secular also
total materialists you have to believe
in you know neo-marxism

because you know all religions will be
banned and so forth um

yeah i think you're better off just not
worrying too much about that i don't
think it's any anywhere close to that
yet

although i mean the left is sort of

facing in that direction and some
lefties really seem to think that we'd
be better off with a government just
controlling everything

so

i think i'll just move on to the next
question

after confusing myself and others i'll
just move on to the next question this
one's from you each hero

and this is a good question i used to
think about this a lot when i was a monk
especially

yuichiro says maybe you've answered this
before but is piracy theft i don't think
so because piracy is just copying

intellectual property not depriving
someone of something for example if you
memorized a book and wrote it down and
gave it to someone else that could be
considered piracy what do you think so
this isn't like the pirates that go are
meaty you know like the parrot
the peg leg and stuff that's that's a
different kind of piracy that's that's
definitely like stealing
off and killing so you don't want to be
that kind of pirate

um

but his piracy theft

when i was a monk

i was really hesitant

like very hesitant to to copy books

because it would say right there on the
like the the copyright page you know any
any copying of this book and you know
like

i can't remember the whole spiel but
it's you know by electronic or
other means you know so you must have
permission from the from the author or
the publisher
and i would actually have have to get
permission

from the publisher because
um it could be theft and if you steal
something if a monk steals something
that's he's excommunicated he's kicked
out of the monk for the rest of his life

so i took it really seriously because i
didn't want to get excommunicated

um

later on i started watching like pirated
movies

now there are these these video sites

you know some of them are called put

locker you know various versions of it i

think maybe they're they're based in

places like russia

and they're online and it's like

apparently there's there's

little statements underneath there that

it's really not illegal the way this

there's some kind of loophole

you know sort of like uh

torrent streaming kind of stuff where

it's you're sort of exploiting a
loophole in the law

and

at least from the monks point of view

um

you know in order to get excommunicated

you have to it has to be illegal

you know it's i mean the way the the

word the way the the rule is worded

which is uh paraghika number

two i think

um you know it has to be in such a way

that you'd get hold in front of a judge

and the judge would tell you what a

stupid fool you are for having done that

you know so it'd be you'd have to do

something

bad enough to get chewed out by a judge

for it

um

or

if it's worth more than a coin called

pata we have talked about that before

so it is i mean you're getting into like

a gray area here

um

yes it's

if you're in doubt don't do it

that would be my best advice

um yeah if

the example you ichiro gives if you

memorized a book and wrote it down and

gave it to someone else i don't think

that would count as piracy

like i've written down

um almost entire books

like as a monk write them down into a

notebook i think if assuming that there

is such a thing as rebirth in past lives

i think i was a kind of scribe like i

wrote books

i copied books professionally back

before the printing press got invented

because i i'm very patient with that and

my handwriting is neat and i can just

write page after page

um but again i digress

yeah pirating books or

or movies uh one thing is you have to

have the intention of depriving somebody
of something and some people can say
well you're depriving them of their
royalties

in you know in a way

so

maybe you should talk to a lawyer

and see if it really does count legally

as theft in some forms of it do i'm

pretty sure

especially if you're copying something

and selling it

that's really what they're after i'm

pretty sure

because i mean nowadays you can just

download like

copyrighted videos off of youtube and

that sort of thing

and uh

i mean it's just

i don't think that would be illegal but

then if you turn around you upload it

and monetize it

you upload it again somebody else's

video and monetize that then i think

youtube just automatically spots that

with their checking system now and uh

diverts the the profits to the the

person who owns the copyright or who

first posted it or something

but yeah

i really can't i mean this would be a

very

complicated answer even assuming that i
was really

into like the whole all the legal tech
technicalities the permutations and
everything

so

yeah just try to avoid breaking the law
and i mean if if you really are if you
really do have the intention of of just
depriving somebody of their their
royalties or something that would that
would qualify because technically you do
have to have
the volition
of depriving somebody of something in
order for it to be theft in accordance
with buddhist ethics

like for example you see you know

something lying on the ground

if you think that it belongs to somebody

else you pick it up and didn't walk away

there's a wallet or something that would

still be

uh theft

from for a monk anyway but if you are

firmly convinced or you think it's just

very likely that

um you know whoever previously owned it

had given up all claim to it like maybe

the wallet is you know you find it under

a rock it looks like it's been there for

50 years

then uh if you pick it up and walk away

with it you know all the all the money
inside is from you know world war ii era
or something

then i think you wouldn't be stealing
unless you were taking it from
somebody's property you know you're on
the woods or something

so

yeah i guess all this uh talking that
i'm doing is just sort of trying to
compensate for the fact that i really
don't know enough

of the like copyright laws and that sort
of thing to really answer the question
although

from the buddhist ethical point of view
you do have to have the volition of

stealing in order to really steal
something if you take something by
accident

you don't have your glasses on you just
take the wrong bicycle or something
pick up the wrong cell phone that's the
same model as yours thinking it's yours
you put it in your pocket you're really
not stealing anything

because it was done in good faith
but i mean

if you know that you're pirating
something

that's uh already you're kind of
inching in the direction of
of stealing

so you got to be careful

and uh

most monks i think especially like in

the west

you know

they're really not so careful about

infringing on copyright laws

if if pirating really is

um theft

then i assume there are quite a few

uh western and eastern monks who are

just excommunicated without even

realizing it because

you know they watch the movie

that was on one of these

like illicit streaming sites or

something

one of these russian streaming sites
like torrent sites or something
so yeah i'm sorry yuichiroi
cannot answer your question precisely
because i lack the knowledge of
the whole illegal
mumbo-jumbo so i'll just move on to the
next
question which is from rafi
46 and rafi 46
asks another good question
that i have thought about
and rafi 46 says
you often hear the following stance on
abortion from buddhists online
quote this is the following stance

quote the traditional view is that
sentience begins at conception and
abortion is a violation of the first
precept when it comes to legal matters i
am pro-choice because criminalizing
abortion only creates more problems than
suffering

making abortion illegal doesn't
eliminate it it would only make it only
makes it more dangerous unquote is this
a valid view in buddhism

um

it's close to my view on abortion i do
think that i mean from traditional
tarawata buddhist point of view life
begins at conception
science biology says the same thing

unless you know the hysterical
neo-marxists have completely subverted
biology like this classical biology
but the life of an organism begins
um when it's at the the zygote stage
when the sperm and the egg come together
you've got this
unique
unicellular organism which in the case
of a human being is going to you know
multiply
until it's got trillions of cells but
it's still the same the same organism
with the same you know genetic code and
everything
the same genotype

so

um i can i can agree that i mean just
because something is immoral doesn't
mean that it should be illegal
and that's i mean that's a slippery
slope right there

um if you want to just
ban anything that's immoral because
people have differing views of what is
immoral obviously

um christians

the fundamentalist christians on the one
side

and you know like the the far far
radical lefties on the other side i mean
they're not going to agree on a whole
hell of a lot

with regard to you know what is or is
not immoral i mean morality is almost
just an obsolete term for the far left
because i mean they may give it lip
service but they're quite willing to
perpetrate just about any atrocity in
many cases just to further their cause
because you know it's
the ends justify the means or some such
so

i mean i can agree sort of i don't agree
with some of the last word making
let's see

criminalizing abortion only creates more
problems than suffering i don't think
that is necessarily the case

um yeah like what happened in america
with roe versus wade being overturned by
the supreme court it just means that the
individual states can decide
whether abortion should be legal or not
and so

um you know uh

a democrat voting state shouldn't be too
far away then if you really want to get
an abortion

um

you can just cross state lines

you know go somewhere where it's legal

and a lot of companies nowadays are even
claiming

that they will actually pay women
to make the trip to a state where

abortions are legal

so they can get a safe abortion

their body their choice supposedly

although technically the uh

the developing embryo is not their body

oh so

is this a valid view of buddhism i think

in buddhism you just don't want to do

politics at all i mean

i mean you don't even take it as far as

this quote takes it where it's like i i

think that abortion is wrong or

unethical or you know more bad than good

in most cases

um so i'm just

don't approve of it

but um you know if whatever the insane
society chooses i mean i'm not gonna
you know i'm not gonna lose any sleep
over it i think that would be more of a
a valid view in buddhism

um taking the side of legalizing it
still

yeah i think i think a good buddhist
could still

um follow this

this example that uh

rafi 46 gave

i mean so long as you're just separating
politics from morality then uh

you know it's like

buddhists can also say you know killing
is bad but still i mean we have to have

armed forces to protect the country
you know it's it's not like they're
condoning killing it's just they're
acknowledging

this like an ugly fact

and some people are especially well i
don't know i wouldn't even say

especially on the left but some people
like if you make an ugly statement just
stating an ugly fact they just assume
that you want that to be true

you know some ethnicity has a higher
cognitive

higher cognitive skills on average than
some other ethnicity you know people
will just accuse you of

like wanting that to be true it's like
you know you want that to be true you're
a racist but i mean you just
acknowledging em empirical data
so

yeah i think it's all in all yeah it's
it's more or less of a valid view in
buddhism depending on you know your own
attitude

because really it's it's your own mental
states that make something
um

ethical or unethical skillful or
unskillful so i'll just move on to the
next question which is from toronto nat
and toronto nat says
jesus said that we will know them

meaning the value of spiritual teachings
by their fruits

isn't this concerning when it comes to
the dominance of leftism in buddhist
discourse

i mean it's concerning but not for the
reason really that toronto and that
seems to be implying

i mean it's concerning because
buddhism has essentially been hijacked
by the left in the west and it pretty
much has always been

um

dominated by
the left with regard to
western buddhists you know

asian immigrant buddhists can be still
be conservative and everything you know
they're just almost completely
separate from western buddhists
unless it's traditionalist western
buddhists who are being ordained in the
eastern traditions and so forth but
monks are very different from from
western western monks are very different
from western white people as a general
rule

so

it is concerning that
the buddhism among westerners has been
hijacked by the left and by a left that
is going more and more and more insane
you know up until around 2015 it was

relatively harmless

but it's it's really just

buddhism is just being redefined and
distorted and mutated and [__] over
and [__] up

until i mean you can hardly even say it
to buddhism anymore but then it's like
um

like

some people on the left i'm sorry to be
picking on the left so much

but

you know it's like they can't define the
word woman

you know

democrat politicians just refuse to to

define the word woman or else they'll
use this circular invalid definition of
a woman as anyone who identifies as a
woman

which we are using the word to be
defined in the definition itself which
is bad practice

and i mean you can say the same thing
about buddhists in the west now buddhist
is anyone who considers himself to be a
buddhist anyone who identifies as a
buddhist is a buddhist regardless of
what they believe and that's
becoming more and more
the politically correct
view with regard even to theravada
buddhism not just buddhism in general so

you've got

people who are

so-called authorities on terrible

buddhism

who are just really concerned with say

queer theory in terrible buddhism or

you know they're just

hell bent on having

you know like ethnically representative

sanghas which is kind of strange

considering that most sanghas are

overwhelmingly east asian and south

asian

but they think that there's not enough

representation of

brown people

in western sanghas

because they just pretty much ignore the
existence of all the immigrant asian
sanghas

ah

so getting back to toronto nat's
question

um yeah the fruits

you know them by their fruits i mean

no pun intended

i assume

yeah it's like they're just taking the
ball and running with it they're just
taking something established so that
it's easier to

um you know

sort of be famous with it to have

influence with it you know they don't
want to just start their own religion
which would be just ridiculously absurd
anyway

so they just take buddhism or whatever
the religion is they've pretty much made
attempts at all of them pretty sure
and just redefine it and just turn it
into

you know buddhism flavored or whatever
flavored

cultural marxism

emancipatory politics and so forth

which is is nonsense it's not it's not
even really terrible anymore

so

it's not really

turning terra vada into

something bad is just

it's this they're just turning teravata

into something that isn't theravada

anymore so it's not really that

terribada's going bad it's just they're

just

kind of

destroying it in a sense

turning it into like i say buddhism

flavored

political correctness

psychobabble stuff

so i think i'll just move on to this

question

and this is from rob alias dhamma farmer

and this is kind of a strange question
on a scale of one to ten how nice was
your birthday cake

what kind of a question is that it's a
difficult one for me because it seems to
me it's my theory on cakes

once you get up to a certain level of
niceness it just levels off

so

um i'm not sure i would even call uh a
nicest cake at 10.

i mean it was a really nice cake it was
totally deluxe my sweetheart said it was
the best birthday cake she ever ate
and it was good it was definitely good
custom made

um so

yeah

raiding cakes is really not my forte

but uh

yeah we can call it a a 9.8

on a logarithmic scale

i guess i'll just move on to rob alias

donald farmer's next question here

please give an update on the career move

now you're destined to be a fat pencil

armed office dweller

well

i don't think i'm going to become fat or

pencil armed

and

the career move is

i was offered a promotion

of moving from the

the back

where

the uh

the sheet metal stuff is being made

to the front where it's being sold

and so

i would make more money considerably

more money

and i'd be sitting in an air-conditioned

room in a comfy chair

and i wouldn't be just drenching in

sweat all day

and i wouldn't come home as exhausted

but still i'm gonna have to start

working out or something i'm gonna have

to get some weights or something and
make sure that i don't become uh fat and
pencil-armed as rob alias delma farmer
uh has put it here
so it's it's still in the future i still
have to take some kind of test
and uh
it's just
yeah i'm not exactly sure what it's
going to happen it might be a few months
down the road before i actually stop
running the machines and driving the
forklifts and sit out front and
sell things for commissions
so i'll just move on to the next
question
i mean i was warned this was gonna

happen

that i was gonna

get promoted

but uh

we'll see how it goes i'm not

complaining either if anyone anyone

associated with me at work

sees this i mean i'm really not

complaining i mean i'm willing to take

the job i was offered the job it wasn't

just ordered to take it

so it's all good

so the next question is from erin

and aaron says

explain the buddhist life stages you

mentioned

and that was that was like a personal
conversation between me and erin
and uh i was telling her
that uh
in terrible buddhism and i again i don't
remember if it's in a suta or if it's
just in the commentarial tradition like
the we city maga or something
that um the the different decades of a
human life are divided up
by their predominant quality
and it goes all the way up to 100 but
i've forgotten most most of the last
ones because it's
we'll get to that the first the first
decade you know from zero to ten is like
the puerile the helpless

babyish decade where you're not fully
developed yet you're still just sort of
like a tadpole

then

the second decade from 10 to 20 is the
decade of play

and then the third from 20 to 30 is the
decade of beauty

and then the next from 30 to 40 is the
decade of strength

and then from 40 to 50 is the decade of
wisdom and then 50 to 60 you you've

reached the the midpoint from 0 to 100

and that's called the decade of decline

and after 60 i don't even remember what
they're called but it's just getting

worse and worse until you're finally you
know it's sort of like um
shakespeare i don't remember which play
where he's talking about the different
stages of life
and you know at the end
according to the buddhist version you're
bent over like a roof beam a lot of roof
beam but there was some sort of bent
um it could have been like a sapling
that was bent like this to make a kind
of building like a kwanzaa hut kind of
an early kwanzaa type of building but
it's talking about how your back is just
completely curved over and you're like
going blind and deaf and everything
it just gets worse and worse after after

you hit 50 according to this this scale

so now that i'm

59

i really don't uh

don't follow that one very much i mean

when i was 40 to 50 that was my decade

of wisdom

so i hope i haven't completely lost that

so that's the best that i can remember

and i i don't even remember the source

it's it's in

terrible buddhist tradition

but um maybe it's the wesudai manga i'm

not sure

so i'll just move on to the next

question this is from

arya akuma

and arya akuma asks what makes one an
ascetic

and that's a good question

um i think an aesthetic would be someone
who

if they're not averse to comfort they're
just indifferent towards comfort

um

i think that would be a fairly good
definition or you could even say that
even if

a person likes comfort but they just
avoid it for spiritual reasons that also
would make an ascetic

but the whole thing is pleasure and
comfort

that um some people and and i've been
like this i think my father was like
this too i mean you have a certain
appreciation for comfort but at the same
time it's sort of like
eating lots of ice cream or something
where you know too much of it just start
makes you makes you like soft and weak
doughy out of shape
and again it's sort of like uh
the
the protagonist in the movie apocalypse
now
towards the beginning he's saying that
if he's not on a mission he just feels
like he's just degenerating getting

getting softer and weaker

and so there is some of that in the
aesthetic mindset unless you're just
indoctrinated into a religion where it
says you've got to be an aesthetic or
you're going to go to hell or if you
want to be liberated you must be an
ascetic and they'll just do it for that
reason

um

but yeah it's a certain appreciation for
discomfort

not necessarily pain i mean buddhism
you're not supposed to be out trying to
hurt yourself you're not cultivating
pain like trying to get
you know

scorpions to sting you or something but
um you just follow the middle path
between you know the original middle
path in the dhamma

the buddha's first sermon according to
tradition you know you avoid the the two
extremes one is sensual pleasure and one
is just self-torment

you know self-indulgence and
self-torture you've all you follow the
middle path

and

um i mean the middle path in ancient
india was

would just be considered complete
self-torture by modern or post-modern

standards

where

you know you're just literally wandering

around homeless and penniless and

begging for your food in the streets and

wearing rags and so forth i mean that

was the middle path

now this is fairly acidic i mean the

early buddhists were definitely

aesthetics although they were accused of

being wimps like shaven headed

householders by even more extreme

aesthetics like the jains and the

ajivikas

in in ancient india

because i mean buddhist monks were

allowed to use uh sand they were allowed

to wear sandals you know they were
allowed to use a walking stick
which were just considered you know just
luxuries that are just leading you to
leading you to hell by these more uh
extreme aesthetics
but yeah i think uh voluntary discomfort
would be the uh
the
the criterion
for uh
what is it the diagnostic trait of an
ascetic is someone who uh
endures voluntary discomfort
so i'll just move on to the next
question this one is from i z

and i z says

when you try to describe nibana as a
kind of primordial consciousness or a
marble block isn't that trying to reify
the unreifiable

there was a sutta where venerable
sariputa warned against going too far
and trying to grasp the ungraspable with
the conceptual

tools that we have i just cannot quite
remember its name or number also nibana
is included in the list of papanchad
or papancha of all things in

uh majjima nikaya number one
wouldn't it be more prudent to refrain
from trying to see or describe the
nature and basis of nibana and describe

it in merely soteriological and
non-samsara terms as the buddha did
um well i mean
if you're going to talk about anything
you have to reify it you've got to
label it you know you got to turn it
into an it which is already refining it
so

um even the buddha would
reify nibana of necessity at least
grammatically

when he'd be talking about it because
when once it's in it it's already
reified

so there is that it's just the
limitations of of human language you

have to reify anything you talk about

um

one thing here that i don't quite agree

with is nibana is included in the list

of punch it or papanchable things in

majime nikaya i mean you can turn it

into pancho once once you've named it

you know once you're referring to it as

it

although one of the many

synonyms for nibana is nipa pancha which

just means without papancha that's

that's what nibana is it's once you have

gone beyond papancha which is like

diversification you know it's like

setting up a multiple world of various

old various real entities

um

that's papancha

or just dividing things up between

this and that

could be considered papancha so nibana

doesn't have any division of this and

that

so

i mean i could just

refuse to talk about nippon because once

you talk about it you have to reify it

to some degree

and people ask questions about it and

i'm trying to explain it in such a way

that i mean it's like the raft in the in

the sutas where

it's just

um in in a text the uh alagad upamal

suta of the majiminekaya which is a very
good suitor to read

the buddha compares buddhism to a raft
made out of rubbish you know man walks
to a riverbank

and the river is flooded

and he needs to cross the river there's
no bridge there's no ferry and so he
just looks around at all the

you know sticks and and vines and grass
and so forth

and he just ties it all together into a
kind of float and he holds onto it you
know it's kicking his legs and getting
to the other side and once he gets to

the other side he lets it go you know he
doesn't continue carrying it on his head
you know he'll just drag it up on the
bank and beach it and leave it there
also just push it back out in the water
and let it float away and that's what
dhamma is that's what buddhism is it's
just this

convenient contraption made of rubbish
that gets you liberated it gets you you
know to the other shore you cross the
flood of samsara and then i mean it's
because it's not ultimately valid
you let go of it you don't need it
anymore it's just a way of getting to
the other side and once you're at the

other side you don't need it anymore

so

i mean it's it's all kind of rubbish if

you think about it

but

again i mean if i'm to be answering

questions about nibana or about ultimate

reality i mean you have to reify it to

some degree with a proviso that no

amount of

thinking about is really going to

get you to understand it

i like the idea that

words

um like the words of a zen master this

is a zen saying or like the a master the

zen master is like a master archer who

can shoot down other arrows in flight
you know he sees an arrow he'll shoot he
can shoot it down with another arrow and
that's you use

words and thoughts concepts in order to
shoot down other words and
words and thoughts and concepts you know
it's like this idea hits against that
idea and they just both fall on the
ground

so

it still requires a certain amount of
reification in talking about
what ultimately
cannot be validly expressed in words
but um

you know so long as i'm uh
like hitting up against other people's
beliefs

kind of weakening their reification of
nibana or reality in one way

even though i'm using another way of
doing it you know it's it's called
skillful means especially in mahayana
so i'm doing the best i can

next question

is from caveman

and caveman asked thoughts on open
individualism question mark and then i
didn't know what open individualism was
so i asked him if he could clarify and
then caveman said
in contrast to closed individualism

which asserts that conscious experiences
are bounded or closed off by personal
identity open individual is open
individualism is the idea that all
conscious experience is experienced by
the same
self

so the only difference between my past
experiences in this life and the
experiences of any other being at any
other time is that i can remember my
past experience but all
experienced oh i can remember my past
experience but all experiences are still
mine

i've heard that the buddha was an empty

individualist you only exist for a
single moment all other moments are
experienced by different selves but i
don't know if that reflects his view
accurately in my opinion empty
individualism implies open individualism
since they are both opposed to closed
individualism the whole issue just
revolves around what exactly the self is
and how experiences can belong to
oneself but not another
well i would point out here towards the
middle of this
he said i've heard that the buddha was
an empty individualist you can only
exist for a single moment all their
moments are experienced by different

selves

um yeah i would say that that is not an
accurate statement

because

i mean it's the buddha didn't say that
yourself exists for only one moment

i mean he said you just don't have one
there is no self

and this is based

according to my understanding

ultimately on padichistamapada or

dependent arising which was saying

everything in this phenomenal universe

and hegel unfortunately had a similar

idea

um

i think kant was kind of going in this
direction also

but

everything that exists this multiple
universe that what the taoists call the
ten thousand things

is

um it's virtual

i mean it's not like completely

absolutely

non-existent

but it's conditional you know if this
exists that exists if this ceases that
ceases

and

this is also conditioned by other things
so you've got this web

of of conditions everything mutually
conditioning everything else and nothing
has an inherent self-existence
and so

um to seem like we exist as individuals

it's conditional and like virtual

but it's not ultimately real

so we don't have a self even for one

moment it's not like the self is

changing from one moment to the next

with no connections in between it's just

that no matter how connected it seems

uh ultimately

the self i mean it's fine to talk about

it from within a psalm sorry context but

once you get out of the box

of of this entire samsaric system

it's just it's just meaningless and

invalid

so

with regard to open individualism

um

there can be the appearance of open

individualism you can say that

empirically from a psalm sorry point of

view it's more valid

than closed individualism

um

yeah so that would mean

if i understand this correctly in closed

individualism there wouldn't be any

rebirth

otherwise you just you'd have to

remember

you know what happened in your past

lives which usually is not the case

so i think that's what he's hitting on

here is that in order for rebirth to

really be valid you'd have to have

i mean you couldn't have closed

individualism where you know it's like

who i am is just limited by this one

lifetime

um

but this whole lifetime is itself kind

of conditional and virtual and not

ultimately real you know it's like we're

in a simulation

so you can have you could say that the

assimilated

open individualism

fits

the matrix we're in better than a

simulated closed individualism but

ultimately is a kind of simulation

i mean it's not totally false

it's not like a total pure illusion

but still it's conditional

on all these other conditions that are

also conditional so you don't have any

solid ground

you know you don't have any nucleus of

ultimate reality that everything is

based on other than just the just the

background of reality that is formless

and infinite and

non-differentiated

so i'll just uh

hope

that that made some semblance of sense

and i'll move on to uh chaplin

and uh chaplin says this is a weird one

it's easy i guess

but it's it's weird

what is your favorite insect and native

mammal in south carolina so far

well i was going to say the wild turkeys

but it's it's a little

wild turkey is not an insect

so let's see my favorite south carolina

insect

i guess it'd have to be the fireflies

you know like late spring and early
summer they're they're just like
flying around in the yard at dusk like
flashing off and on it's really nice my
dad called them lightning bugs so i call
them that too sometimes so i guess my
favorite south carolina insect
um is the uh the lightning bug
and my favorite native mammal
south carolina i don't see a whole lot
of wildlife um other than wild turkeys
and groundhogs and of course like
squirrels and things i haven't done any
really good
like hiking or camping yet that was like
one of the first things i wanted to do
when i got here

was to hike paris mountain and we're
living like practically in the shadow of
paris mountain right now and it's a
state park all over the top of it with
hiking trails and everything
and uh i still haven't hiked it so maybe
after uh humble stature moves to
greenville in a few weeks
maybe he'll go hiking with me
and after i get the white-collar job
before i've lost all strength i can uh
go i won't be as exhausted after work
and maybe uh they can work something
else a short hike anyway short hikes
plural
so my favorite native mammal i guess

it'd be the groundhogs because they just
don't have them on the west coast

where i lived it was kind of interesting
the first time i saw one it was it was a
roadkill i didn't know what it was at
first

but it's uh you know it's like a marmot
it's like a big ground squirrel but
they're they get big

sort of along the lines of a wombat so i
guess that would be my favorite south
carolina mammal except for genghis who's
my dog

maybe i should include the genghis my
dog

he's my favorite mammal in south
carolina

and he's a problem child but he's he's
like uh

an innocent child of nature

you know he's just beyond good and evil

so that's uh chaplain's first question

chaplain's second question

uh is the last question of this video

the very last question is kind of a

naughty question too

chaplin asks have you ever had your iq

formally tested and if so what was the

result

and modesty for bids i don't i was

tested formally i did take an iq test

when i was a teenager

um

and it might be lower now do all the uh
substance abuse as a teenager mainly
and uh

cooking my brain with malaria like seven
or eight times in burma and uh

just just getting older

but i did have my iq formerly tested and
i'm just too damn modest

to tell you what know what the actual
number was i'll just let's just say it
was above 140.

and uh

yeah i pity the fool think i am not
modest

so that's that's it and uh that's the
last question

and uh again

if you uh are interested at all anything
you want to know just feel free to ask
and uh be sure to look at the url links
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ahead and subscribe and smash that like
button
as they say
i am becoming a salesman soon
so i'll just have to start the crazy
hype stuff and wearing funny costumes
and so forth
and that's that's pretty much it so uh
until next time
be happy

Hello, and welcome to question and answer number 31. I am your host, Bhante Yuttadhammo.

And today is a day off from work, and instead of becoming a whirlwind of activity on my day off, I've just been like wet raggy and lazy.

I've become like a sloth.

A five-toed sloth, but I am up for answering questions. It is time to answer questions, and so here we go. We got a bunch of good questions here.

Including some subtle ones, which is I I usually get some subtle difficult questions, and today is no exception.

But I'll do my best.

I promise.

And so, without any further rambling,
the first question is from Mary, spelled
m e r r y.

And Mary says, "Is there in vinaya any
description of how robes should look
like? Maybe a t-shirt could be
considered an upper robe."

And uh

Yeah, there's like very precise
descriptions of what uh a monk's robe is
supposed to look like.

Um in fact, I could do an entire I could
do an entire video on this if I thought
people would be interested enough in the
precise rules

for sewing robes, and making robes,
dyeing robes.

But um yeah, there's lots of rules. And

uh

uh

a kosher robe, a robe that is completely
in accordance with the rules of monastic
discipline, first of all, is a large
rectangle of cloth.

An upper robe and an outer robe would be
no more than six
spans by nine spans.

Pretty sure it's six by nine.

And uh that's according to the Buddha's
hand. And

um nowadays, we tend to consider the

Buddha to have been tall, but not like
gigantic. Whereas,

in the the commentary to the Vinaya
rules, the Buddha's hand was, if I
remember correctly, three and a half
times the size of an ordinary person's
hand, which

we tend to consider to be impossible
nowadays in the skeptical West.

So,

um,

it has to be

cut up into pieces and then sewn back

together again in a certain way. So,

you've got a robe, I mean,

I've got one of I've got two of my monk

robes that are in storage up in the

attic. I could have brought them down.

Maybe I should just get a book.

Ah, I don't even have the book. Okay,
forget the book.

We'll just have to

try and explain this. So, you got a
rectangle of cloth, and it it would be
at least five panels
like this.

It always has to be an odd number.

And each panel is called a mandala, like
a a mandala,

which just means like a panel. And then
the panel is divided into two parts
that are sewn together, and then you got
these reinforcing strips called kusi

and adakusis that connect all the panels together.

And it has to be dyed a certain way.

There's a a list of

allowable fabrics,

which would be,

let me see, cotton, linen,

wool, silk, hemp, and Bengal hemp, or uh

sun hemp, it's called.

And see, the there are colors that are

not allowable,

including um bright yellow, bright red,

blue, white.

So, a monk's robe is a a rectangle of

cloth of a certain size

that is cut into pieces and sewn back

together again. Originally, it was just

rags that monks would pick up off the ground and then they have to sew it together. And that's why you got these reinforcing strips.

It's just to make it stronger because thread wasn't very good in those days.

It wasn't reinforced polyester thread.

And also, I found living in Vermont that when people throw away cloth, it's usually pretty wrecked cuz the people aren't very rich. And in the Buddhist time, cloth was relatively expensive, more so than now.

So, it has to be sort of

uh like dyed sort of a brownish like uh like a dirt color.

You got certain allowable or not
unallowable

uh

dyes that you can use.

Um

Yeah. So, anyway, uh a t-shirt would not
be considered an upper robe. In fact, a
t-shirt, strictly speaking, would be
against the rules because monks are not
allowed to wear laypeople's clothing
unless their clothing, their own robes,
have been lost or destroyed or stolen.

And so, in such a case, you're allowed
to use just about anything to cover
yourself.

But, uh that's just temporary until you
can get a new set of robes. And monks

wear three robes, the upper robe, the lower robe, and the outer robe.

Which are all just rectangles of cloth that are wrapped around the body in certain ways.

So, yeah, wearing t-shirts and stuff would be technically against the rules.

Although,

most monks in the West do wear shirts and so forth and socks and stocking caps and all that, which technically are against the rules. But, if you're living in some place like Canada or Germany where it gets really cold in the winter time, then you pretty much have to fudge on the rules in order to avoid losing

toes to frostbite or or just hypothermia
or whatever.

So, I'll just move on to the next
question. Although, I mean, I could go
on a long
a really long one just on on monk robes
cuz I was somewhat of an authority on
that. I was one of the only monks I knew
of I was the only monk I knew of in
Burma
that had robes that were completely
according to the rules.

But, um

we don't need to dwell on that. I'll
just move on to the next question, which
is also from Mary.

And Mary says,

"You often talk about John of the Cross as possibly enlightened as a possibly enlightened mystic. May I bring up to your attention the 4th-century desert father Evagrius Ponticus who was a great mystic and wrote, 'A quote, a man in chains cannot run, nor can the mind that is enslaved to passion see the place of spiritual prayer. It is dragged along and tossed by these passion-filled thoughts and cannot stand firm and tranquil.' Unquote.

As I studied sayings and the way of life of those first Christian hermits in Egypt, they are very similar to real Dhamma and Vinaya in almost every way

except begging for food but working for it by making reed ropes or baskets and selling those at the marketplace once a month or so. I'm fascinated by this type of living, which is almost non-existent these days. Is becoming a true monk in Asia

in any way better for spiritual growth than

than building some reclusive shelter in northern Canada or living in a cave in Egypt?"

Um living a true

Let's see. becoming a true monk in Asia in any way better for spiritual growth?

Not necessarily, although it is a system that was designed for the purpose of

helping monks to become enlightened,
monks that were trying to become
enlightened, to become enlightened.

And uh

living in a shelter in northern Canada,
I mean, if you're if you've got support
or you're independently wealthy and can
just feed yourself

um, yeah, fine. But there there are
monks that uh live in shelters in
northern Canada.

And uh yeah, they don't seem to be uh
suffering any spiritual hardships
necessarily.

So, really

um

the the ancient the life of an ancient Buddhist monk in India was largely a part of the culture. Um, it was, you know, designed for uh spiritual efficacy. So, there is that, but it's not the only possible way.

But you would need some kind of way where you're not distracted by worldly concerns and you can spend a lot of time you know, in contemplation.

So.

Yeah, I mean, monks can live in uh northern Canada. Monks could live in a cave in Egypt. Um, technically, they wouldn't be allowed to sell stuff you know, like ropes and um baskets and so forth, but um

I mean, monks that do, you know, they make things.

Um

like uh Wat Pah Nanachat for a while was kind of famous for the bull stands that they would make. Um

So, I mean, monks do have no they do have chores. They can't have chores.

So, I mean, just uh doing that kind of like a simple peaceful kind of work is uh not necessarily

uh in conflict with uh becoming enlightened.

But, I think I've uh pretty much answered that one.

So, I'll just move on to the next one.

This is also from Mary.

And Mary says,

"How

how you were dealing with boredom living alone?"

Well, the thing is I don't get bored easily.

Um I could just live in a cave

pretty much staring at a blank wall,

and uh I wouldn't get bored very easily.

I mean, I'd have a few books to read. Um

yeah, it's like the most bored I ever

got as a monk was having to sit through

a long sermon given by a Burmese monk.

Some of them are really long-winded, and

you just sit there. So, like really the

most bored I would get was when I wasn't

alone.

I'd I'd be more bored being with other people that were on a completely different page from me than just sitting alone at ease, you know, meditating or reading a book or watching the ants crawl around or whatever.

So, yeah, I guess some people are more social than I am. They're less reclusive than I am by nature, maybe less uh less independent or less of a loner or whatever.

So, um yeah, they can have a real difficulty. It's like I've been told that uh there are a lot of people in

prison

who really aren't afraid of taking a beating, but they're terrified of solitary confinement. They can just go nuts. They can crack up. But, um as for me, I think uh I would might actually prefer solitary confinement if I was in prison, that is. Not that I particularly want to go to prison.

So, I'll just move on to the next question. Also from Mary.

And Mary says, "How did you deal with hunger?"

And I mean, that's kind of similar to uh the boredom one. I mean, food has never been one of my real major attachments.

And so, I could go 30 years

um

just eating one meal a day.

And usually like rice and goop.

Just like an assortment of different kinds of goop all dumped together. Like I just take my alms bowl, which is back there on the table.

And just go into a village and it might be uh 80 people would each put in like a spoonful of rice and a spoonful of curry. And so, you get all this stuff just piled on top of each other.

Somebody might pour like honey on top of all that. And it would just be glop.

And uh

I mean, if it was really really icky,

then

uh I just eat till I wasn't hungry

anymore and then I have to stop just cuz

it was disgusting. But uh

Yeah, just

hunger really um

it it never really bothered me. I don't

know. It's like um

some people if they're hungry, they

just, you know, they just got to eat

something or else they're just going to

be climbing the walls or something. But

uh

with me it's just a sensation that

arises, you know, it's like

uh

any other kind of discomfort I suppose.

Um and when you're a professional
ascetic and you're supposed to just
accept discomfort with equanimity, then
uh

hunger is a pretty easy one. There's a
lot more difficult ones that you're
dealing with. You know, just sitting
there meditating just getting bitten by
mosquitoes. You might have four or five
mosquitoes biting you at any moment.

That's that's more difficult than
dealing with hunger. Or just uh
just sweltering heat so that you're
unable to stop sweating ever.

That can be worse than being hungry.

Um

yeah, so I mean, it's

it's just a personal thing. It really didn't bother me very much. It is kind of interesting, though.

Uh and just as an aside,

that when I was a monk, I did not feel

thirst. You know, I just never felt

thirsty. I'd have to judge whether I

should drink something just by how

dark-colored my pee was or something, or

I'd start feeling kind of like dry mouth

and maybe a little dizzy or something.

Then I'd know I I was getting

dehydrated, and then I'd drink

something.

But since I have uh come back to the uh

secular world and I'm working for a

living, I actually feel thirsty
sometimes.

Which is in a way is you could be sort
of symbolic that uh you know, the cause
of all suffering in Buddhism is tanhā,
which uh literally means thirst. But uh
that's not necessarily any kind of
symbolism at my expense. It's just could
be just a coincidence.

And uh

yeah, I'm I'm doing well, so I'm not
really not complaining.

So anyway, I'll just move on to the next
question. This is from Fred.

And Fred says,

"What What's your thoughts on the alaya

and dharmakaya? Are we immersed in
consciousness?

I heard nirvana is on the inside,
samsara is on the outside."

Well, this is kind of two questions, or
maybe even three.

The alaya, or the alayavijnana, or it's
In English, it's often called the
storehouse consciousness,
was

a kind of consciousness that was
um hypothesized

or postulated by the Yogacara Mahayana
Buddhists.

And uh it was a way of
um

kind of sneaking the self into the back

door after kicking it out the front door.

Um

the storehouse consciousness was just a place where your karma was stored, where you know, it sort of all in one place, so to speak.

And

yeah, Theravada doesn't deal with that and it's really not necessary, I think.

And even if you could hypothesize or postulate an an alaya-vijnana, it wouldn't be ultimately real.

It would all just be part of the phenomenal illusion, so to speak.

But with regard to the Dharmakaya,

um

yeah, that's that's interesting. The

Dharmakaya

is uh

it's like the the Dharma body. Kaya

means body. So, it's the Dharma body of

the Buddha and it's just reality,

ultimate reality.

So,

I mean, you've got the Nirmanakaya is

the the Buddha in his physical body as

as this human being that would you know,

sweat and eat and drink and go to the

bathroom and eventually pass away.

And later after the Dharmakaya and the

Nirmanakaya were were developed, there

was a another one called the
Sambhogakaya, which is like the the
cosmic Buddha in glory up in in a heaven
realm somewhere.

Um

and it's sort of like
in Christianity, you got like
you know, you got Jesus the carpenter's
son living on the earth and then you got
like the Christ spirit in glory in
heaven, which would be like the
Sambhogakaya and then it maybe just got
the spirit of God which pervades
everything at the highest level. It's
it's similar to that. And so long as
you're going to reify the absolute,

which in Theravada Buddhism is kind of a
no-no,

um yeah, it's it's

it's can be a useful model. Just

something that you can kind of get a

handle on to help you understand certain
things

um provisionally until you're able to

just let go of all models and

provisional

like hypotheses and so forth.

But yeah, I mean it would be like

Brahman in in Vedism or like Vedanta.

And you know, or like what a lot of

mystics would say it would call God just

this infinite consciousness or infinite

divinity that just pervades everything.

That would be the Dharmakaya and so long
as you're

um

talking about, you know, ultimate
reality

reifying it. Um

I mean you can talk about that. It's not
necessarily harmful unless you just
cling to it and just insist that, you
know,

only this is true and anything else is
wrong.

Because even right view can become wrong
view if you cling to it.

So

let's see. That's my thoughts on the

Alaya and the Dharmakaya. Next Fred says, "Are we immersed in consciousness?" That's one way of looking at it. I mean, really you cannot explain ultimate reality in words.

So

you can use that as like a working hypothesis until you reach the point where you can just let go of all conceptual, you know, figurings out of things. And then you just live it.

You're just immersed in it. You might be immersed in consciousness for all I know.

So

yeah, I mean that's that would be like the Dharmakaya. We are immersed in

consciousness or that's what Vedanta teaches. That's uh indicative of some of the back and forth between Vedanta and Mahayana Buddhism like in early medieval times in India.

Uh there was a lot of borrowing of concepts and sort of going back and forth like that.

Uh let's see. And then he says, "I heard Nirvana is on the inside. Samsara is on the outside." Um yeah, I mean I've I've said something similar where um especially from a Mahayana's point of view, Nirvana is the essence, the underlying essence.

And samsara is the outward form.

So, you know, like the the the
the simile of the block of marble that
I've mentioned several times in these
Q&A videos.

Um, you know, you've got this block of
marble that contains within it every
possible statue.

Including and then every impossible
statue, too, maybe.

And um

the the statues would be samsara and
just the and the

block of marble itself, the formless
stone, would be

um, ultimate reality or Nirvana.

And so, yeah, Nirvana would be the
essence of reality or the essence of the

world in in from that point of view.

And uh samsara would just be these conditioned forms that aren't ultimately real.

They're just conditioned by other conditions that are also conditioned by other conditions that, you know, ad infinitum.

So, yeah, it's not a bad way of putting it. Nirvana's on the inside, samsara's on the outside. Or it might be better to say that, at least from a Mahayana's point of view, Nirvana is the essence and

um, samsara is the form of the world.

So, I'll just move on to the next question, which is from Didymus.

I think that's how you pronounce it.

Didymus.

And Didymus says, "In Catholic legal theory, you have no obligation to follow an unjust law, which is a law lacking proper authority or which asks you to do something against natural law. For instance, a totalitarian Marxist materialist wouldn't really have any way to object if their central committee decreed that all children will now be raised by randomly assigned families, whereas the Catholics believe that parents have an inalienable natural right to raise their children. Does

Buddhism have a concept of natural law?

Maybe a concept like tyrannical rulers that can overrule some laws?

Uh yeah, I would say certainly because for example, you got a devout Buddhist who is drafted into the army and

he just refuses to kill and so that he might actually be shot as a traitor, but still it's better to

be killed than to kill from a Buddhist point of view, especially if it's done on purpose.

So,

yeah, I mean, I don't think there's anything wrong at all

about you know, a a Buddhist who is being forced to do something he considers to be wrong, even telling a lie.

You know, the government says you have to lie about oh, let's say some election and uh you just refuse and tell the truth and you take the hit, but uh that's your karma.

So, yeah, I mean, you don't have to follow any law no matter how unethical it is.

Although with regard to like arbitrary laws like speed limits and so forth that really don't have any moral value, they're more just practical laws for, you know, things running smoothly, uh

Buddhism does say that

uh you should go along with laws like

that. You should uh

you know, give unto Caesar what belongs

to Caesar, so to speak.

So, uh yeah, I think I answered that.

So, let's move on to the next question.

And this is from

Rafi46.

And Rafi46 says, "What are your thoughts

on Korean Buddhism?"

And honestly, I don't know very much

about Korean Buddhism. I've met a few

Korean Buddhist monks.

Um there's one in particular that um

we were at a retreat together

And he This is just so weird. This is like typical of of like Burmese Theravada Buddhism.

Um because he wasn't a Theravada Buddhist monk, he had to kind of go in the back of the line behind the ordained Theravada monks.

And so, you know, he was treated pretty much like a layperson.

And so, he just got or got himself ordained as a Theravada Buddhist monk just for the duration of the retreat.

And uh he just took off the gray pajamas and put on the brown robes and he didn't even have to disrobe from being a a Mahayana Buddhist, which is um it's it's not exactly right, but this

is largely the way it's done in in
Burma. I'm digressing like a son of a
gun here. But I I actually saw a
a Catholic priest who was ordained as a
as a Buddhist monk. I think he was just
ordained as a novice, but still, I mean,
he wasn't even a Buddhist.

So, what are my thoughts on Korean
Buddhism? As I say, I don't know that
much about it. It seems to be more
uh pure, less corrupt than then Japanese
Buddhism. It's it's similar to Japanese
Buddhism in certain ways. Like they've
got their own version of of Zen there.
And uh the monks are still celibate, I'm
pretty sure.

Uh they didn't go through the Meiji Restoration like in Japan where they're trying to secularize the country to help it become like a spiritually bankrupt uh industrial superpower.

But uh aside from that, I mean, I really don't know that much about Korean Buddhism other than it's similar, you know, it's it's like in between Chinese Buddhism and and Japanese Buddhism and it's got the same kind of elements as Japanese and Chinese Buddhism, but I assume it's less corrupt than either because Japan, as I say, was secularized like around the turn of the 20th century.

Um monks were allowed to marry and so forth. And in China, I mean, just about any religion other than communism is forbidden. There are Buddhist monasteries in China, but they're just there mainly for like tourist reasons.

So, yeah, I guess of the Eastern Asian the East Asian forms of Buddhism, Korean might be the healthiest.

But, uh that's just a guess.

So, I'll just move on to the next question. And this is from the Arya Suvastri project.

And the Arya Suvastri project says,

"I've heard that meditation itself has a

positive effect on our karma. That if someone regularly engages in the practice, things tend to go better go better than if the person had not meditated. For instance, if someone had some cause and effect coming back to them that might not be so pleasant, that meditation tends to mitigate the issue. But, there is also the story, I can't remember which one right now, about one of the Buddha's followers who finally took a violent death to finish some past karma of his. Why would he do that if he could just level up a little more and become a Buddha himself? And finally, is it wrong thought to engage in meditation to mitigate your own past karma?

Personally,

I engage in that thought often and while I'm meditating.

Since I don't know what negative karmic things I could have done in past lives, hell, I'm still trying to straighten out what I've done in this life. Your thoughts, please. Warm regards, much respect. Sadhu."

Well, um first I'll just uh get back to this the story of the uh one one the Buddha's followers who finally took a violent to finish some past karma of his. That was Maha Moggallana who was the Buddha's left-hand man. He was one of the two chief disciples along with

Sariputta.

And uh he was literally beaten to a pulp so that according to the uh text there was not one bone left unbroken in his body.

And um he just decided he just decided to well, it's his karma.

You know, it's pretty much inevitable.

It's like unavoidable fate for him cuz it was powerful karma.

So uh

he finally he just uh let it happen.

Um he was an arahant, fully enlightened, so it wasn't that big of a deal for him anyway. So he was like, well, this is just the way it goes.

I mean, he wasn't really identified with

this physical level anymore anyway.

But uh this question here, why would he do that if you could just level up a little more and become a Buddha himself?

He couldn't become a Buddha himself.

Um he was fully enlightened already. He was an arahant. In fact, he was a chief disciple with uh

he was he was the most gifted with regard to psychic powers.

But uh once you're enlightened, I mean, you can't just uh

like back off from being an ordinary arahant and decide to become a a full like a samma sambuddha.

According to Theravada Buddhist uh

cosmology or the just the world view,
there can only be one Buddha at a time.
And he was already fully enlightened.
You can't become unenlightened. So that
was just it.

But uh getting to more to the uh to the
point of this question here,
let's see
which I'm looking for.

Let's see.

What is it wrong thought to engage in
meditation to mitigate your own past
karma? No, of course not. In fact, uh it
is encouraged. You get good karma for
um meditating, especially if you're
meditating correctly. You get good karma
for, you know, acts of generosity. You

get good karma for keeping precepts and all of that is encouraged and one of the main reasons it is encouraged is because it is conducive to your happiness in long run.

Which means it's it's helping your karma. Like um there's a famous uh sutta. I don't remember which one.

But uh the Buddha is talking about, you know, your bad karma from your past is like a handful of salt and if you pour that handful of salt into a glass of water

then the water is so salty you can't drink it. But if you pour that same handful of salt into a pool of water and

dissolve it all in, you might hardly be able to taste the salt at all.

And he compares that to, you know, bad karma and good karma where if you've got bad karma, the best thing you do is just do as much good as you can to dilute down the bad karma in your life.

And meditation is one way of doing it.

So yeah, there's no probably there's no problem at all with that.

So go for it.

And I'll just move on to the Arya Sūtra project's next question.

He says

I assume it's a he.

Hypothetical. If someone had, let's say, legal obligations

uh such as an ongoing order from the courts for child support. Thankful
thankfully in In parentheses he says,
"Thankfully I'm not obligated by
anything of the such in quite a while."
And that's that's then
parenthetical aside here. "I recall the
story of the monk you told that the
mother of his child put the infant in
front of him and he continued to
meditate and not father the child. In
other words, he would have just let it
starve. But let's say that this person
had all the qualifications to become a
real deal Theravāda monk but still had
those obligations.

How would a monk with no job pay this or handle this?

Or would it be handled for him? Warm regards, much respect, Sadhu.

Um well, getting back to that famous story, I think it's in the commentaries of this this man who left his wife and child to become a monk, to renounce the world and strive for enlightenment. And he's sitting under a tree in a park meditating, and the the estranged wife comes with the baby and just sets it down in front of him, and then she leaves. But, I mean, it she's watching. She's like watching from behind a tree or something to see what he does. And when he just ignores the baby, she

eventually comes back and picks it up and goes away. So, it could be that the meditating monk, I mean, he maybe knew that his wife wasn't just going to leave the baby there to die of exposure.

So, it wasn't necessarily that he was uh uh just going to let it starve.

I mean, it may be that if she really left, he might at least try and do something with the baby, find somebody to take care of it, maybe some faithful supporters or something.

Um but setting that aside, um let's see.

Let's say the person had all the qualifications to become a a real-deal

Theravada monk, but still had these obligations. How would a monk with no job pay this or handle this? Okay. Um there are conditions for a monk being ordained.

And like, for example, a runaway slave is not allowed to be ordained. Like uh a runaway soldier, like a a soldier just goes AWOL and tries to be ordained, that's not allowable.

Um a debtor who owes money to somebody is can is not supposed to be ordained.

Someone who does not have the permission of his parents, if they are still alive, is not supposed to be ordained.

Um I mean, you have to uh be a a biological man, at least 20 years old

from conception.

Um which means you have to have your
cojones.

Or And then uh see there's there's a few
others. You have to be a human being,
for example.

Um you're not allowed to have certain
diseases like leprosy.

And there are reasons for all this. Um
but uh

with regard to a monk with obligations
for

if he is obligated by the government to
pay child support, then he's essentially
a debtor. I mean, as soon as it comes
due, he is in debt.

So, he would have to clear that up somehow.

You know, make arrangements for somebody to pay it or you know, get his wife to agree to you know,

let him do it and not pay the child support. But if he is legally obligated to uh

to like pay child support or pay money to somebody, he's he's you know, he doesn't have all of his affairs settled.

Then he really can't renounce the world cuz there's still going to be these strings attached, some of them legal strings.

Some of them legal strings that can uh cause the sangha to have a bad name, you

know, a haven of criminals. And I mean, it does happen like um there was a a Cambodian monastery in uh oh, Stockton, California. I heard about. I've never been there. And I heard about this a long time ago. It's it's different now. But um there was the the Cambodian sangha raja was living in exile there.

And as an aside, um some people from the Star Wars uh movies came and were following this old Cambodian monk around for for several days recording the way he talked and and his mannerisms and so forth. And they basically Yoda'd on him.

But that that's a total aside. Um but it was like there were a lot of Cambodian gang members in Stockton. Now, I've read, I don't know if it's still true, but Stockton used to be um the city with the most gang violence of any city in America, which is saying something.

So, the Cambodian gang members if like the police were after them if it was just things were just getting too hot, they'd hide out in the monastery. They'd be ordained temporarily. And they'd still have guns and they'd have their hot rods and everything.

Um,

but the thing is getting back to this

question

um

some of these

some of these situations like you're not supposed to be a debtor, you're not supposed to be a runaway slave and so forth.

Um

some of these if you are ordained it's just an invalid ordination. Like if you're not a full 20 years old from conception or you're not a full biological man with a full set of cojones um, then you're just not a monk. I mean they might have done the the ceremony and everything and you're still

not ordained. You're still you're just disqualified. But some of these other ones like

I knew a monk whose parents were like evangelical Christians and they just would not consent to him becoming a monk but the monk who ordained him anyway said, well, we're willing to take the hit.

Which meant that the ordination was still valid. It's just that the monks who participated in the ordination were guilty of an offense that required confession. So, they just took confession afterwards.

And with regard to a monk who own owes

child support, I don't remember. I think it would still be a valid ordination.

It's just the monks who ordained him were guilty of an act of wrongdoing.

But um

I think I think I've pretty much answered that question. So, I'll just move on to the next question which is from Numa.

And Numa says

what's your take on the ethics of teaching Buddhist meditation practices to people who have no understanding, ignorantly or willingly willfully, I mean.

Okay, I'll start over. I I misread his

question.

What's your take on the ethics of teaching Buddhist meditation practices to people who have no understanding, ignorantly or willfully, of core Buddhist doctrines?

Well, this happens all the time and most Western Buddhists or most Westerners who practice Buddhist meditation are pretty ignorant of basic Buddhism, as a general rule.

They might not realize it, but then again,

their teachers are pretty ignorant of basic Buddhism, also as a general rule.

Uh

So, my take on the ethics of teaching

Buddhist meditation practices and not
teaching them like anything else about
Buddhism, like uh
you know, some
some meditation

Buddhist meditation is just like stress
relief. It's like mindfulness-based
stress reduction.

And it's it's taught by psychologists
rather than monks.

And um

I don't think it's necessarily
unethical.

Um

because I mean, if they're ignorant of
like just the basics of ethics and so

forth,

they're not going to get very far with it anyway.

And if you do meditate correctly, then it is going to improve your understanding. You know, it's your your wisdom will increase so that you might be more interested in learning more about Buddhism or um you might at least have better reasons for meditating than just wanting to relax and sleep better or some such. So, yeah, I do not consider it to be unethical to teach only Buddhist meditation practices and not like the the the other foundations of the whole system.

Um

I mean, it might be better if people
knew

the the just the basic, you know,
Buddhism 101 along with the meditation
techniques, but um

obviously, it's not entirely necessary.

And uh it still will I mean, if they're
meditating correctly, you will still you
will still have good results.

So,

um yeah, I really don't see a problem
with that.

Unless

they uh the all they do is just meditate
without knowing anything about Buddhist

philosophy and then set themselves up as teachers of Buddhism and not just this one meditation technique that they they got good at.

So, that that would be sort of ethical problem and we're dealing with that in the West now where you got academics who care more about

you know, just all the politically correct stuff

more than they care about Buddhism and

they're setting themselves up as

Buddhist teachers and just turning

Buddhism into

you know,

Buddhism-flavored social justice.

And I mean, just about every spiritual

system that has found a place in the West is being subverted in the same way. But um I talk about that a lot. So, most of you who are familiar with what I talked about already know this stuff.

So, I'll just move on to the next question. That's from Toronto Nat.

And Toronto Nat says, "What do I do if I find myself torn between Christian and Buddhist practice?"

Well, I mean, there's a lot of overlap.

Both Christianity and Buddhism teach you that you should do good and avoid doing evil and be generous and tell the truth and

you know, don't don't go around

murdering and raping. Don't kick puppies.

So, a lot of it is just overlap. I I it's

um if you if you read the writings of someone like St. John of the Cross or Meister Eckhart,

you know, even the the the contemplative practices like the advanced yogic practices were very similar between Buddhist monks and contemplative Christian monks.

So, I mean, there's a lot of overlap and mostly the differences are in the theory that

sort of guides the practice or gives an excuse for the practice or whatever.

So, I mean, if part of your practice is venerating Jesus or the Virgin Mary, then

yeah, I mean, there there's obviously a certain amount of friction between that and Buddhism.

But, um

read St. John of the Cross and it's I mean, he

he's almost a Buddhist.

He might have been a fully enlightened one, too, and he's certainly, as far as I can tell,

a master of of jhana. He was just a meditation master.

So, let's see.

Um yeah, the practice is really not the issue. It's the theory that I mean, they're they're just not compatible. The practices are largely compatible, but the theory is is not compatible and you're just going to have to choose what works for you. I mean, what can you really

deeply accept? And then it's not just this superficial thing, but you can have like a deep conviction or confidence in it.

And if it's Christianity, well, bless your heart and just go with that. Um just

choose one of the other or if you're able to somehow reconcile them. I mean,

they're not the theory part isn't
entirely reconcilable, you know, it's
like you know, if you're if you think
that you can only go to heaven through
Christ,

then Buddhism would be sort of
um disqualified just from that.

So,

yeah, you're just going to have to What
is it? I mean, setting aside the
practice, I mean, that's really not the
problem as far as I can see.

It's the theory that you're going to
have to work out for yourself. I mean,
what is it that you can deeply accept?
What is it that just resonates with you?

I mean, what is more acceptable to you?
And if both are acceptable to you, then
maybe you can just uh
somehow juggle the two.

But, I'll just move on to the next
question.

I hope I didn't just confuse Toronto
man.

This next question is from Thure.

And Thure says,

"Does the Buddha ever speak about the
consequences of focusing on only one
part of the threefold training while
ignoring the other two? This is sort of
like uh

um

Numus' question.

So, I'll just Now that I've uh
interrupted myself so rudely, I'll start
over. Does the Buddha ever speak about
the consequences of focusing on only one
part of the threefold training while
ignoring the other two? Does a
development of one
uh does the development of one lead to a
concomitant development of the other two
or is there a hierarchy of importance
among the three parts such that a
development of one by itself would bring
one closer to liberation than a
development of the other two by
themselves?

Uh and then he says, "You can choose to

read this part or not. For example, I try very hard to be virtuous and follow the five precepts, but I'm a rotten meditator and hold views in conflict with right view, at least according to an orthodox Theravada perspective. A monk who spends all of his time studying and obsessing over Abhidhamma might be an example of someone proficient in knowledge, but lacking in meditation and virtue.

Then there is what seems to be the most common today, especially in the West, which is someone who practices and may even be very skilled at meditation, but who rejects central teachings or flouts sila.

Which of the three is closest to liberation?

Closer than all three might be someone like John of the Cross whom you have mentioned before.

You know, like a couple of minutes ago, who was seemingly highly developed in both meditation and virtue, but who from a Buddhist perspective lacked right view on account of his Christian beliefs.

Okay.

So, in Buddhism you've got a kind of trinity.

Sila, Samadhi, Panna.

That's three. Sila, which is morality,

Samadhi, which is concentration, in this case mostly meditative concentration, and Panna, which is understanding or wisdom.

And according to the this

orthodox Theravada,

you have to have purity of morals before you can have purity of mind. You have to have purity of mind before you can have purity of wisdom. So, it would be sequential. You have to start with morality. If you try to start with meditation without having pure morals, you're not going to get very far with it. That's the orthodox view.

But, I don't necessarily see it that

way. I mean, some people are just got a talent for meditation and they can go into deep meditative states without bothering much with keeping five precepts, especially if it's just like, you know, drinking alcohol sometimes, something like that, swatting mosquitoes, you know, not something like outrageously evil.

But, it seems to me that the three are like a tripod.

That

that two of them hold the other one up.

I mean, you have to have some wisdom before you'll even want to start living a moral life.

You know, and um so, it's like

the three are

you know, if you one grows, the other

two will tend to improve also.

So, I mean, you can't have an unbalanced

practice where you're just putting way

too much emphasis on morality, say, and

and not meditating. And I've There are

monks who are just like sticklers for

practicing the rules of monastic

discipline,

and they just don't meditate.

So, they're just kind of like stuck at

uh the basic level, at beginner's level,

almost.

Um

Well, of the three, obviously, it seems

to me obviously the most important is wisdom, because that's what gets you enlightened. I mean, if you can somehow wrangle wisdom without having the morality or the meditation, then uh Yeah, I mean, you might be like Osho or something, where you're just this rascal involved in sex scandals and so forth, but still

you know, he might still have wisdom of some sort. Um but I I generally consider it to be like It's like a tripod.

And so, uh if one develops, the other two tend to develop at least to some degree.

Um let's see.

Does the Buddha ever speak about the consequences of focusing on only one part of the threefold training while ignoring the other two?

Um to some degree. I mean, I I don't remember

a sutta that really addresses the issue um the way this question is asked.

Although, I mean, there are cases like uh in the in the commentaries, the Dhammapada commentary, there's the story of Pointless Potila, where um there was this this monk named Potila who was who had mastered the the scriptures, which is an anachronism, because, you know, when the Buddha was alive, you didn't even have

scriptures yet. You know, there wasn't a Tipitaka yet.

But, um this, according to the story, this Potila just mastered all the He was just a complete scholar, and he followed the rules and everything. But, the Buddha would always call him Pointless Potila, Tuchcha of if I remember the Pali correctly.

Um you know, he just come here, pointless Potila, you know, go pointless Potila. He's walking by, there goes pointless Potila. And he's essentially um making fun of the fact that Potila just wasn't a meditator. I mean, he's spending all of his time studying and

just mastering the doctrine and not
really

um

not just not meditating.

So, I mean, you have to have all three
according to Theravada. You know, one
leads to the other, which leads to the
other, but um

um I mean, ultimately, according to
Theravada, you have to have all three.
You should You should perfect all three
if you're going to become fully
enlightened.

That's just orthodox. Although, um as I
was saying,

um

I'm a little skeptical of that. I mean,

it seems to me that

um for example, I mean, you just have to

have the wisdom

to uh

to to want to keep the precepts anyway.

And a certain amount of concentration

helps you to keep the precepts, and

and it's just all sort of

interconnected.

So, let's move on to the next question.

And this is from Rob495.

And Rob495 says,

"Have you ever considered Alzheimer's

This is a weird question.

Have you ever considered Alzheimer's as

a kind of upgrade in terms of reduced

mental activity and also sometimes a
shift in personality,
uh i.e., miserable person becomes like a
happy child when they have Alzheimer's?
I have a theory that some of those
historically named as saints may have
been persons that would find themselves
locked up today due to Alzheimer's. I
also recall a monk explaining magnetic
draw of one of the oldest Sangha members
uh as he was so happy and childlike,
which has the hallmarks of Alzheimer's.
Cheers."

Um

this is maybe slightly idiotic a
I used to know this monk who was like
totally strict. I mean, he was like a

Buddhist Rambo. He was following the the optional ascetic practices all of them at the highest level at one time. I mean, he was just you know, you got the middle path in Buddhism where you know, it's like self-indulgence and self-torture. Most people veer over to the self-indulgence side like 99.9%.

He was the 0.1% that would veer the other way.

And eventually

I mean, he just tried so hard. His strings were too tight. He couldn't play the right music. And so, he gave up. He just kind of He didn't He didn't become

a lay person again, but he became like this hermit who just lived in this big hollow tree.

And he became very cynical with regard to Dharma.

And he had a similar example to this Alzheimer's theory

where there was a a guy in Thailand who was cleaning his ears

with like a something that was too pointy. And he like perforated his eardrum and it caused an infection in his brain.

And he just became like completely blissed out, you know, he's just like quiet and smiling and and this this monk turned hermit who was kind of cynical

about Buddhism because he dropped out.

Was saying, well, then he's he's like an arahant.

He's uh

you know, what's the difference?

But I mean, one of the main differences is is that an arahant or like a really advanced level spiritual practitioner is more conscious than the average person.

And I don't think you could really say that with someone with Alzheimer's who doesn't even recognize their own family anymore.

I mean, I wouldn't say that

you know, the current president of the United States, Joe Biden is

wiser than he was

15 years ago.

I mean, it may be that some famous saints in history who were just, you know, all blissful and happy, um yeah, they could have Alzheimer's. They could have just had some sort of mental illness.

Um Hotei, who's often confused with the Buddha, you know, the the one with the big belly who's got his hands up in the air sometimes,

um he was uh

um

well, he was sort of like the village idiot.

And he was just very cheerful and he who

would go around begging for spare change
and then when he figured he had enough,
he'd go to like a candy shop and get
candy and distribute it to the little
kids and

he was sort of like the Chinese Santa
Claus.

Um but really, I mean, it's it's very
big difference between being,
you know, mentally or whatever
the politically correct word for it is
now,
or um

having Alzheimer's and and really just
being fully conscious.

There's a big difference. I mean, it may

be that some

people who were like saints, you know,
famous saints in history who were, you
know, canonized as saints or considered
by tradition to be saints, they may have
been very virtuous and so forth, but um
yeah, maybe they did have Alzheimer's,
but um

it's it's it's not the same as being
genuinely wise.

What happens is, you know, it's like a
baby

who uh you know, babies

don't tell lies and they don't do

anything bad maybe, other than screaming
a lot.

Um

you know, they just have all these
they're called anusayas. They're like
latent tendencies. They've got karma
that can't

it can't manifest itself because they
just don't have the hardware hooked up
good enough yet to to start doing bad
things, apparently.

And uh someone with Alzheimer's it's
similar. I mean, it's not like their
karma is purified by getting
Alzheimer's. It's just that it can't
manifest as well. And so they've just
got like this blockage.

You know, it's like
they they can't behave as bad just

because they don't have enough upstairs
going on anymore to do it, but it the
the the seeds of it, the base the the
underlying tendencies are still there.

So, I hope I answered that question.

So, I'll move on to the next question by
Rob495.

I've often reflected on the quote quote

"Events happen, deeds are done, but
there is no individual doer thereof."

Unquote. Which is allegedly from the
Buddha himself, although I've heard it
may be wrongly attributed to the Buddha.

Could you confirm if this is likely
genuine? Um that exact quote, I'm pretty
sure it comes from the Visuddhimagga.

That that, you know, there is there is

like uh

no doer of the deed, but uh deeds are
done

kind of a thing. Yeah, that's that's a
famous quote from the Visuddhimagga.

Um

and it's it's an interpretation of
Buddhism.

Um

I mean, there is no self in Buddhism,
anatta. That I mean, it

This is I mean, it can be accepted as
orthodox Buddhism. In fact, it is

orthodox Buddhism cuz the Visuddhimagga
is like the main commentary to Theravada
Buddhist texts.

So,

the Buddha might have endorsed it with qualifications.

I mean, ultimately, there is no self.

See, there is no individual doer, there are no events, and there are no deeds that are done. I mean, ultimately, I would go that far.

That not only is there no person who walks, there's no walking. Whereas, the Visuddhimagga would say that there's walking going on, there's just nobody who walks, which doesn't make much sense. I mean, it's like

um

sort of subject and predicate or noun and verb or it's like uh you know, the

object and the behavior of the object are really inseparable. You take away all the behavior of an object of a being, for example, and so long as it's just sitting there not doing anything, it's considered a kind of behavior, the being's gone, too. To say that, you know, there there is walking, but nobody who walks just doesn't make sense. That there is uh you know, there's deeds are done, but there's no doer. I mean, that doesn't make sense. I mean, if there's no doer, there are no deeds either, really, ultimately speaking. I mean, at the superficial worldly level of samsara, there's doers and deeds.

But, uh at the highest level, there's no doers and there's no deeds, either.

So, yeah, I would consider this to be uh

to some degree like uh

orthodox corruption of Buddhist

philosophy, but that's just my philosophy, but that's just my opinion.

Okay. So, I'll just move on to the next question.

From deepat427.

And deepat427 says, "Is the cover art on your book supposed to be a Buddhist version of Plato's cave allegory?"

And uh the quick answer to that is no. I might as well get one of my books.

Oh.

Let's see here.

One moment, please.

Okay.

So, here's the cover of my book. And the other two

have essentially the same illustration, just in different colors.

See?

I might as well show you the whole thing. I can hype the book at the same time as I answer the question.

So, that picture there is just um it's like an impressionistic version of the famous monk in uh I think it was Saigon

before the the Vietnam War started who

immolated himself.

Um

as I used that as like a header to uh my

Minds page and uh a few other places

I've got the burning monk and this is

this is the burning monk. It's not

Plato's cave. It's just a

the monk here's the gas can.

See?

And he poured it on himself and lit

himself on fire to protest the uh the

Roman Catholic government of South

Vietnam at the time.

And this I just like the

um I like the picture because he's just

sitting like in deep meditation like

he's like serene as he's burning.

And um

for a while I was kind of a burning monk myself.

So, that's that's what it's about. So, I'll just move on to Bipap427's next question.

And that is in the book Miracle of Love there's a quote from Maharaj on one of his last days to a devotee saying that they'd see him again in other forms or something to that effect. If this him is this him saying he'll take rebirth?

Um in Maharaj's case he seems to have been so advanced. I think this might be just beyond that that he was just kind of everywhere.

And that they would see him in other forms.

Um

just because I mean he was like a personification of God. I mean he was I mean he

didn't really have an ego anymore and so he just kind of blended out and so it's sort of like the

certain aspects of him would be

appearing to his devotees just their own faith or devotion would just bring it out, you know, it would just manifest.

Something along those lines.

But uh I mean Maharaj had

I mean if you read the book Miracle of

Love, I mean he's supposedly could be in

more than one place at the same time.

Um

Yeah, I mean he just broke all the rules.

And uh

Ram Dass who was his devotee

uh just was

convinced that he that Maharaj was a fully enlightened, fully realized being.

And uh

I mean there there are

suggestions that he did take rebirth

like uh

there's one story in that book where he went up into the into the hills during the summertime and there was this old

woman who was just amazed that he was he looked as young as when she was a young woman or a girl. And he said, "Nah, I was reborn."

That was you know, it was just he looked the same but had a different body or something.

Um yeah, it's one of my favorite books.

I've gotten that on the bookcase, too. I won't bother to uh

to go fetch it. But uh Miracle of Love stories about Neem Karoli Baba by Ram

Dass. It's

one of my favorite stories. It or one of my favorite books. It's just a mind-blower.

So uh is this him saying he'll take

rebirth?

Um I think he he just goes beyond that.

I think he he had just merged with the the universe at that point and was just going to be you know, aspects of him would just be manifesting especially to his devotees that were were sort of there devotionally just or through their karma just calling it forth without him uh

really having to do anything.

So, next question which is also the last question is from Chaplin.

And Chaplin says, "Some online sources describe the five precepts as mostly for monks. The taking of intoxicants for

example, it reads as strictly forbidden for monks but discouraged for lay people. How can Western lay people understand this when we have widely used weed, wine, energy drinks, and other drugs that didn't even exist in the Buddha's time, or didn't even cloud the mind, but may enhance it?

How do we explain this gray area, and what exactly is an intoxicant?

Okay. Well, I mean, there's a few things I can address here. One is some online sources describe the five precepts as mostly for monks. Well, actually, the monks have like five thick

books of monastic discipline, like the first books on the bookcase over there in the dark bindings, the tall ones.

That's the the five books of of or the first four books of Vinaya.

And so, monks got

maybe between two and 3,000 precepts.

And the five precepts really were designed primarily for lay people.

Um although there are commentarial texts that say that

all morality can be condensed down to to these five precepts, which uh

is not necessarily true, in my opinion,

but I mean, you could, I suppose, if you

if you really

were

hell-bent on that.

But anyway, um the main question here is

uh

how can Western lay people understand

uh essentially intoxicants?

That they didn't even exist, don't don't

cloud the mind, but may enhance it. How

do we explain this gray area, and what

exactly is an intoxicant? Well, that's

in the in the fifth precept itself.

I undertake the precept to abstain from

I see, ale, wine, and intoxicants which

cause cloudedness of mind or

heedlessness.

So, that would be uh

pamajja.

majja

Pamajja or majja. mean

uh intoxication and it's it's

interpreted to mean heedlessness or

carelessness or just like being in in a

stupor. Just it makes you more stupid,

you know, it makes you uh

um

less moral just because you're less

inhibited and don't give a about

breaking rules, that kind of thing.

So,

I mean, there was there were drugs that

weren't necessarily considered bad even

in the Buddha's time.

Um like the the Brahmins were taking

this drug called Soma,
which uh is never really denounced in
the text, although it may be that the
Soma sacrifice had already become uh
past history by the Buddha's time. But,
um there is mention of cannabis
in in the books of monastic discipline.
It's called bhanga.

And uh it is allowable as a medicine.

And monks are even allowed to own a pipe
for inhaling fumes of medicinal
substances.

So,

yeah, it's like the main the main issue
is whether it uh it causes cloudedness
of mind. It make whether it makes you
less wise and obviously not all drugs do

that. In fact, it may be that most monks of my generation, approximately my age, began with drugs, you know, like psychedelic drugs, you know, like not like heroin or something, but um something that expands consciousness.

And uh then they wanted to uh cultivate the same states of expanded consciousness or similar states of expanded consciousness without the use of the chemical.

So, that's fairly common. Um getting back to Neem Karoli Baba, he he said with regard to something like LSD, um if you took it under the right circumstances, it could be beneficial.

If you took it in a cool place that's quiet and maybe if you take it alone, that kind of thing.

Um so, yeah, it's like I think most monks don't really have an issue with caffeine, for example. You know, monks sit around drinking tea all the time.

And uh

it may be when

I mean, at first there might might have been a controversy. Sort of like uh in Islam when coffee first got discovered,

uh some of the imams were wanting the death penalty for drinking coffee, but uh

uh people like coffee so much that uh

that one

that one didn't work out for the imams.

So, yeah, it's it's whether it makes you
clouded of mind, makes you less
conscious.

That's that's really the thing and

um I mean, the same drug for different
people might have different effects and
just if you take it for certain reasons,
like any kind of drug that you're taking
recreationally,

uh probably would be

just from the the orthodox hard-nosed

Buddhist point of view would be better

off avoided. But then again, if you're

really following strict hard-nosed

Buddhist ethics, you wouldn't even put salt and pepper on your food to make it taste better. That's just wallowing in sensuality, listening to music, just I mean, it's very very subtle. If you if you really want to really want to take that route and you're probably better off as a monk if you really want to just go full blast. So, yeah, I mean, the main point is if it makes you stupid, if it makes you less wise, if it makes you foolish, then you shouldn't do it, whether it's a drug or anything else. And uh if it makes you more alert, um especially if it's non-addictive, then yeah, I mean, drinking coffee in

the morning's not bad. Drinking a Red Bull

I already finished mine.

is not bad necessarily.

Tobacco is a tricky one because uh a lot of monks smoke tobacco including some Thai monks that were considered to be fully enlightened like Ajahn Mun. I guess he chain-smoked. And so in Thailand, it's just considered of course it's okay to smoke tobacco because Ajahn Mun did it and he was a fully enlightened being and if fully enlightened being does it, it's okay. But I think if tobacco was in India in the Buddha's time, the Buddha

I think there's a very good chance he would not have allowed it just because it is literally an addictive drug and a person who smokes tobacco regularly is literally a drug addict.

So anything that causes addiction, anything that causes any kind of like intense craving or clinging is obviously not going to be good from a Buddhist point of view.

So there's that, too.

And I have finished answering the questions. Whether I answered them well or not is another matter, but I I did my best.

And uh

until next time,

be happy.

hello and welcome to question and answer
number 32.

i have answered so many questions and
i'm going to answer more today
and as a change of pace from sitting
back in the office with the bookcase and
the altar and all that i'm sitting out
on the back porch on a coldish
windy day

because it's been raining a lot and i'm
more or less recovered from
our big vacation last week and so i'm
going to start answering questions and
the first question
is from robert
and robert said

says

i had a question but i forgot what it was

but then he continues

and he says so i have another one what is buddhist take on dementia or alzheimer's disease how can one produce karma if one doesn't remember anything well

as far as i remember the the buddhist sutas and also the the monastic discipline doesn't really have a whole lot to say about dementia

which i mean of course it doesn't mention alzheimer's disease because that's like a a new name for something

but um

um i mean it just takes it for granted

that as you get older

your mind is going to go to more or less

of a uh you know to some degree

there's very few people that when

they're in their 90s if they live that

long are still sharp as attack maybe

somebody like uh

uh bertrand russell i mean he was he was

still going to jail and uh writing books

and stuff when he was in his 90s

but um so i guess i'm going to emphasize

the last part of this question which is

how can one produce karma if one doesn't

remember anything

and

the main thing to remember about karma
is that it is volition and so it doesn't
really rely on conscious memory it
relies more on subconscious memory or
force of habit

and even

a person with

late stage alzheimer's will still have
like mental habits you know their mind
will be degenerating their short-term
memory may be gone their long-term
memory may be going

but still

they've got just a mental force of habit
that's keeping them in operation to some
degree much to a much less degree than

when they were 30

but

but still

so it's like your karma is like the

momentum of your mental states

and even though the momentum may be

um

very much

like limited

still it's it's still happening and the

more you just automatically do something

just through force of habit it

reinforces the habit it reinforces the

karma

so

animals also produce karma even though

they really don't have
nearly as developed a memory as we
humans do and we humans i mean we we
grotesquely overestimate our own power
of remembering things i mean it's like
how many people can remember
their locker combinations when they were
in middle school or some such you know
it's like
can you remember the license plate
numbers of every car you've owned or
every every phone number you've ever had
we forget a lot of things
and uh if the camera is bouncing around
a little bit it's because there's this
dog right here see there she is
she's uh

wanting attention and stuff

she's very nice

but let's get back to the question here

how can one produce karma one doesn't

remember anything

uh yeah the karma remembers it's just

this momentum

of mental states

and um

so that happens regardless of any kind

of uh conscious memory because it

doesn't work that way

and i hope i uh answered that question

before uh

being totally distracted by the uh

the dog

so let's see i guess i'll just move on
to the next question
sorry robert if i didn't uh
if i didn't fully answer the question
but again karma is the momentum of your
mental states and when you do have
alzheimer's
or dementia or you're just you know
getting old and kind of losing your
sharpness and so forth it's you know
it's it's more constricted i suppose
but
also it may be that you're just more
locked into just habitual actions
you know your your so-called free will
is less in play and that means you're
just driven by karma and just

reinforcing karma so it's not good i
mean to have alzheimer's disease is not
a good substitute for enlightenment
so i'll just move on to the next
question here which is from joe doe
and joe doe says
what's your thoughts on the direct
aerosol injection on the false premise
and guise of stratospheric
geoengineering poison air raids taking
place across the west the rat poison
insecticides in the drinking supply
immigration to systematic replacement
drug mandates for babies and forced
inoculation
as a buddhist monk what's the best

course of action get nailed like christ
or hoop ass like krishna odin and zeus
thanks

well

um

the first part of this question is just
naming

a lot of things that uh

it's just like

corrupt ruthless governments that don't
give a damn about the citizens of their
countries

are just uh

messing with people

and stop chewing on that

stop chewing on it

dog was chewing on something

so uh

with regard to the whole first part i mean these are like modern problems or post-modern problems but i mean in the buddhist time things were at least as bad i mean you had sociopathic kings invading neighboring countries all the time like on the standard list of the 10 dangers that can for example interrupt a buddhist ceremony or some such number one on the list is kings which means uh either a king preying on his own subjects or some foreign king praying on on your king's subjects which is you so and then of course you had like

bandits

you know infesting the forest you had
diseases that they didn't have cures for
you know just plagues and so forth it
was gnarly so it's always been messed up
and uh the buddhist

solution the best course of action as
jodo puts it

really is not getting nailed up like
christ or whooping ass like krishna

i mean you just opt out of the system i
mean that's obviously what um a serious
buddhist practitioner is supposed to do
he renounces the world and goes off into
the force and gets away from the whole

[__] show

because the [__] show can get you all

tangled up in samsara even more than
just living a quiet life in a hut with
you know a wife and kids and you know
dogs and the geese and the crops and all
that i mean even that
um you know you're gonna have
karmic attachments and entanglements and
so forth
and i mean even just living alone in a
cave you're going to have
complications and you know
but
to
renounce the world go off alone into a
forest
um you know just radical renunciation

that at least keeps it down to a minimum
for someone who is relatively
spiritually developed i mean if you lack
the wisdom or maturity
to

live alone in a forest without cracking
up of course it's just going to make
things worse

but the answer to this question is you
renounce the world go off and live in a
forest somewhere and just opt out of the
whole crazy system because it's always
been crazy

it's not just that um the modern
globalist world has gone insane it has
always been insane
there's new kinds of insanity i suppose

but um

i mean it's still it's still just the
same kind of mess just the human
condition

so i'll just move on to the next
question

and this is from fred

and fred says the question is are
arahants happy

so for those of you who are
not

uh

well versed in terra vada buddhist
philosophy and arahant is a fully
enlightened being
and

the the answer would be yes but it's not
the kind of happy

that

um

you know it's not like a normie kind of
happy i mean they're not like you know
giggling and singing and dancing and
skipping around and big grins on their
face all the time they're just serene
it's just serenity contentment
that's the kind of happiness they have
it's sort of neutral it doesn't really
have an opposite you know it's neither
positive nor negative because if you
have positive you're going to have
negative if you have negative you're
going to have positive and so you wind

up with the the roller coaster ride
and so they just go for like radical
neutrality and that in itself
is the best and most reliable kind of
happiness

and it's not boredom or anything because
you know that's obviously not
contentment

so the question is are arahants happy
yeah they have uh detached from all
suffering and delusion

so

if you want to call you know just
not associating or not identifying with
any kind of you know pain or discomfort
or unhappiness you know it can still

arise

just through the force of you know

nature taking its course you know even

the buddha got really sick

at least a few times

i mean they can still feel pain they

stub their toe they're still going to

feel pain

it's just that they don't

attach to it they're just detached they

don't identify with

the mind body system anymore

and that's the best kind of happiness

there is at least to a to a devout

buddhist

so the next question from fred is can

rebirth really be stopped

and this is it's kind of a trick

question

like

one of the questions that the buddha

himself refused to answer was what

happens to a buddha after he dies

and he just wouldn't answer it

and it's so it's it's like you're going

off the scale

more than stopping rebirth i mean

i could imagine

that there could still be rebirth i mean

this is this is heresy this is not what

buddhism or theravada buddhism teaches i

mean theravada buddhism teaches that

when you become enlightened you just

don't get born again that's it you
you're out of some sorrow but i could
imagine a kind of situation where
an enlightened being could take rebirth
but it they wouldn't be identified with
it i mean it would just be sort of empty
so

whether you call that rebirth or not i
don't know

but it it i think it really devolves
into paradox when you get into the realm
of enlightened beings you're you're
dealing with a kind of formless infinity
that they have merged with so to speak
and i mean when you deal with infinity
there's always paradox
i mean i could go into just

typical just simple paradoxes but it'd
be too much of a digression again i
guess just when you deal with infinity
when you deal with infinity
it's

it's it's just you can't work it out in
your head anymore it just doesn't make
sense

so can

can rebirth really be stopped

going with orthodox terrible buddhism

yes and that is the goal

you want to get out of the

cycle of birth and death

but

even if there is some kind of rebirth

that arguably could take place

um

i mean it would be just like an empty

rebirth it's

there wouldn't be anybody there if an

arahant was you know you're you're an

arahant from birth

um you could argue there's really nobody

there there's nobody who is taking

rebirth really

so

i guess that's probably confused you

sufficiently that i can move on to the

next question

and this is also from fred and he says

question exclamation point what glues us

to corporeality

and i would probably say what glues us
to corporeality is force of habit
more than anything he's like karma
yeah plus um i'm reminded of william
blake and is the marriage of heaven and
hell talking about how you know the
corporeal senses
are really
um you know our connection to the
infinite in this at this level of
existence i mean if you're if you're
just
through
you know whatever like some cosmic
lottery you wind up in this version of
reality then you pretty much have to

have a body in order to have a
functioning mind as far as i can tell
so

yeah

that is kind of an interesting and
unusual question though

so i'm just going to move on to fred's
fourth and last question which is this
is a good one what is the difference
between mono cheetah and wignana

those are three words um

that are found in theravada buddhist
philosophy mono

or mana means mind it's usually
translated as mind cheetah

also is translated as mind usually
it can also be translated as heart

the notorious

ken wheeler

uh translates as soul he's

possibly the only person i know of who

does that

but both mana mono and cheetah are

usually translated as mind if i were if

i were translating a text

and i found mano or chito

yeah i'd probably use the word mind

and now we've got dogs downstairs that

are barking

weenana on the other hand is usually

translated as consciousness

so that's different from i mean mind

is sort of a general term which can

include mental states

and usually mono and cheetah if they're

used loosely in regular discourse

then that can just mean just the

mentality portion of your of your

your system the mind body system when

yana is more limited and in terrible

buddhism

it's like

um

really in orthodox theravada we nana

they're not very good at explaining what

bear consciousness is because

they're saying that

um it's it's ultimately different from

mental states

i would say that consciousness is just

sort of like the ground of of your mind
and your mental states would be sort of
like ripples in the in the in the
surface of the of the water so to speak
um

in abhidhamma philosophy cheetah also
means consciousness

so

according to abhidhamma cheetah and
menyana are the same

and mental states would be called
chitasika so you've got

um in in abu dhabi philosophy four

ultimate realities you've got matter

you've got mind you've got mental states

and then you've got nirvana

or nibana

so

going with uh the abhidhamma cheetah and
menyana would be synonyms

um mono possibly i don't remember i mean

i haven't studied a whole lot of

abhidama and i'm not sure if mono or

mana is really a technical term in

abidable philosophy

but um yeah all in all

the difference between mano cheetah and

wenyana is that mono and cheetah just

mean mind

generally and when yana is more specific

in meaning consciousness although some

philosophical texts will also use

cheetah

as a technical term meaning
consciousness itself just bare
consciousness um just
separate from any mental states
and it's hard to explain that especially
uh if you're in abidance gone
so i'll just move on to the next
question which is from [__] house rat
and [__] house rat says
are you familiar with the philosophy and
teachings of armenian mystic george gerd
chef
and yeah i've read a little bit about
gor george gerdchev
also i read this weird
um

science fiction novel called barefoot in
the head

where there's this world war three is
fought with like hallucinogenic
aerosol bombs and everyone's just loaded
out of their mind

and there's this uh

this guy who was a a disciple of gerd
chef who becomes a kind of
lsd messiah or something

but george shep i mean i i don't i'm not
like gert jeffy and i haven't read any
of his books from cover to cover
i've read

a book by uspensky the tertium organum
that

uspensky was a disciple of gerd chef for

a while

he refers to gerd chef several times

um

now i've i've read about gerd chef

and some things i like mainly he was

teaching just a kind of

buddhist mindfulness you know some a

variation on standard buddhist

mindfulness that was mainly what he was

teaching

although

he had this certain ideas like he would

write his books in a very complicated

difficult style because

he felt that you had to work

in order to earn

higher knowledge

you know you really had to put work into

it in order to really make it your own

and

and like incorporate it into yourself in

a functional way

and also one of my favorite things about

gert chef

is he felt that

people need to be triggered i mean

people need to be irritated

and so

he had a kind of ashram in uh

uh in europe somewhere you know some

kind of center where you go and um you

know

it's like your daily you'd be given like

a daily task or like a morning task and it might be nothing more than just like wiping the leaves off of all the rose bushes you know you just take a little cloth and you're like polishing the rose bush leaves and you're supposed to do it mindfully just whatever you do you're doing it contemplatively you know you're right there in the moment you're feeling all the sensations involved and so forth but as i was saying um

there was this russian refugee this was like after the russian revolution so a lot of russian aristocrats fled from russia into europe and there was this one russian refugee

who was living at gerd chef's place who
was really difficult he was just really
fussy

just you know no sense of humor just and
really he was just an irritant he just
did not get along with people always
complaining and so forth

and finally some of gert chef's

followers i mean they would do practical
jokes on them and finally they did some
practical joke where they like stole his
false teeth and rolled them in cow [__]

and then put them back on you know where
they found them and he just left and

then the russian guy just left in a fury
and gerd chef actually hunted him down

oh the dogs there's there's two [__]

in heat plus a male dog and they're all
having like an orgy down there
so ger chip actually hunts this guy down
and bribes him to come back because he
wanted like a just a chronic irritant
there just to give people an opportunity
of dealing with their aversions you know
dealing with being triggered and so
forth which i think is a good idea i i
kind of like that idea although
nowadays
um dharma teachers or spiritual teachers
have to be as bland
and as gentle as possible just so they
won't offend
you know the the dysfunctional leftists

who who attend these things

i mean like a zen master actually hit
someone with a stick nowadays he's gonna
wind up in jail or sued for millions of
dollars or something

so

that's pretty much all i know about gert
chef he supposedly

uh learned what he knew from some kind
of masters like what was it the
himalayan mountains or something but
really it was sort of a westernized
version of

of like buddhist mindfulness as far as i
know

so i'll just move on to [__] house rap
[__] house rats next

question and [_]

i can't say this word for some reason

[_] house rat says

is there a sutra or text where the
buddha talks about the four different
types of people

those who care neither for themselves
nor others those who care for themselves
only those who care
for others only and those who care for
themselves and others

well it wouldn't surprise me if there
was i don't remember

a text it would probably be in the
angular nikaya and under the section of
fours like the angular nikaya is a

one of the main groups of buddhist
theravada buddhist sutas
that are
organized by number so you've got the
chapter one the chapter two is the
chapter of threes and then you know you
get to the chapter of four and the
buddha will talk about you know there
are these four things
and it could be
that that's in there there are sutas
that are like this that are kind of
similar
like
the monk who
uh see
let's see what's what was i thinking of

here

he uh

uh

it's similar to this it's not exactly

the same

it's like a monk who

um he practices in pain

let's see

okay there's

one of the things is

like spiritual development spiritual

development can be rapid and painful it

can be slow and painful it can be rapid

and pleasurable and it can be slow and

pleasurable so you know there's there's

a sutta where the buddha is talking about

you know that and there's lots of
similar ones and it wouldn't surprise me
if there's one that [__] rat here
is asking about but if you really want
to know i would suggest looking in the
uh
the
section on fours in the angular nikaya
because that's where it would probably
be if it does exist
next question
also from [__] house rat
which i must immune see very carefully
and he says merch when
i remember you selling a to exist is to
transgress shirt
actually i did kind of design it but i

didn't really

uh sell it

i sort of photoshopped

a to existing

transgress shirt there's an artist in

liverpool

who sent me

a portrait of me i i assume as a monk

and any of you who watch

uh my videos and see the bookcase behind

me usually there's the the portrait back

there got a flying saucer flying over

the top

there was a swastika on it too they got

painted over

um

and he sent me 20 20 pounds sterling
which i still have my wallet um i forgot
to bring my water i'd show you i've been
carrying it around for
over a year now

and um

he wanted me to make a shirt
with that that portrait on it

and um yeah i still have the 20 the 20

what do you use it 20 quid

i don't know i don't know slang british

slang

um

so

merch when yeah i don't know i mean

the thing is

i'm not really into hyping myself

and i mean i'm willing to do the videos
it's nice i enjoy doing the videos i'm
not complaining

but like actually hyping myself i've
seen

like there's this guy i watch on youtube
dr steve turley who is just shameless
and he's hyping of merch and just he's
like a used car salesman you know our
prices are so low they're insane
this kind of attitude

and i just can't do it but um i mean if
people

really want something like that i it can
it can happen yeah to exist to just
transgress is a good it's a good

statement for a t-shirt i think

maybe even coffee mugs i don't know

but i'm really not a business person i

just am not a business person the only

way i could have survived as a monk in

the west

is just to have some kind of business

manager take care of

everything

and i would just do my own thing just

write and meditate and so forth

so

merch when yeah it's um that's like a

maybe

there's maybe there'll be a win but um i

mean if people

really want that kind of stuff that's

that's fine we can work something out

so next question

last question from [_] house rat

which sutaneepata translation would you

recommend that's a good question

there are several sutanipata

translations

and

some are better than others um

my favorite the one that i still have

is

it's the polytech society

translation of the sutini pata

with the main translation by kr norman

and then there's alternate renderings

by walpola rahula and ib horner so you

get like three different

possible interpretations they agree on

most of it but you know there are some

controversial

uh

passages

that can be interpreted in different

ways

so that's good there's there's an old

one i think it's by lord chalmers

chalmers

chalmers

called uh woven cadences which is all in

poetry

which is

nice because the the original suta

nipata is mostly in poetry

so that that's kind of nice too it's

good um

i'm pretty sure that

um

i john tenissero has translated it and

with regard to the

the renderings

i would say he's as good as any although

his style of translating verses is kind

of cringy to me i cringe when i see his

translation of verses

because

it's like

to compensate for

the fact that he's not putting it in

regular meter

he's just kind of positioning letter
positioning words more or less at random
on the page and you know because it
seems artistic or something
so it's just kind of
a distraction to me maybe b kuboti has
translated the sunni pattern i'm not
sure
but
um
when i was a junior monk
my favorite part of not only the
suturipata but of the entire
polytupidica is the atakawaga which is
the fourth chapter of the sutanypata and
i didn't see a translation that i really
liked so i just made my own translation

so

chapter four my

my favorite translation would be my own

also i do remember that there's a

translation

of the sutini pata by a sri lankan monk

with a name like buddha data or

something like that and it sucked yeah

that's the only really bad translation

i've come across is that for example the

uh the kagawe sana suta which is the

suta on the rhinoceros horn you know go

alone like the horn of the rhinoceros

is um he translated as unicorn for some

reason

which is not so good and you may have

noticed there's somebody shooting guns
in the background

because we're in south carolina

gotta be ready

gotta prep

so um yeah which suny depot translation

the polytech society translation by kr

norman with the alternate renderings and

he's there's he's got another critical

version of it without the alternate

renderings without the alternate

renderings but with lots and lots of

notes

so that would be good too

um or um ah john denis wrote if if you

can be more patient than i am with his

translation of verses

so the next question is from rui

and rui says

for the putugina can right view emerge

from breath recollectedness

apparently the anapanasuda was taught

only by to those

who were already sodapons

so the question here is um

if you don't have right view can right

view arise through meditation and

specifically on meditation on the breath

and

i would say

with regard to the philosophical stuff

probably not with regard to some things

maybe

like

i mean if you meditate your your wisdom

is going to arise it's like

uh you know sila leads to samadhi which

leads to punja you know according to the

standard

you know just the standard system of

explaining how it works how how

spiritual practice works you you purify

your morals which then causes your mind

to become purified which then causes

your wisdom to become purified and when

your wisdom is completely purified

you're an enlightened being

and

so

you are going to increase in wisdom

through meditation although you may
still be a heretic just because you're
not saying exactly what the books say
um

sometimes through meditation not
necessarily through meditation on the
breath but if you're getting into deep
meditation where your thinking just
stops

then really powerful profound insights
can arise from that
and um

i mean you can get liberating insight i
assume without having read a book
without having necessarily read buddhist
texts if you're just meditating

correctly

like

uh the lesser discourse on voidness in
the majjimenikaya one of my favorite
sutras

he's just he's

the buddha is talking about advancing
and getting into deeper and deeper
meditative states until you finally hit
the signless concentration of mind
uh

the sign less concentration of mind
where as supposedly according to
commentaries it's even beyond beyond
fourth jhana it's just super advanced
it's like

according to the context of the sutta

it's like the highest possible
attainable meditative state
and then when you come out of it you
realize even that had a beginning and an
end even that was conditioned even that
is not enlightenment
so the highest possible meditative state
is still not enlightenment
and when you have that insight it can
just click and you just get knocked
right out of the rut and you become
enlightened
when you realize that nothing you can do
nothing you can do through
like deliberate effort is going to get
you enlightened necessarily

that i mean that's it it's just
something just clicks you just let go
you realize that it's all futile or some
such

and and then then it winds up working
which is kind of uh ironic
so

certain aspects of right view including
the most important aspects of right view
can emerge from breath recollectedness
but you're not going to get all of the
technical philosophy stuff right through
breath recollected just watching your
breath isn't going to
you know make you aware of the the noble
eightfold path and so forth
but you might got you might get insights

into like no self

or impermanence

or or dukkha like the three marks of
existence you might get deep insights
into that

so i'll just move on to the next

question and this is from jeremy

and jeremy says have you read the broken
buddha by s damica what are your
thoughts on that

well as it turns out i did read broken
buddha by stomach i think i've got it
stored in the guts of this computer
as a matter of fact and uh i actually
did a video
on this

book

with uh brian roo this was

years ago when i was a monk i might not

have it on my channel but if you go to

brian roo's bit shoot channel and go

through the the buddhist monk truthers

playlist you may find it in there

that was fresh after i read broken

buddha so i had more to say about it

than i do now

but

ah venerable srivasti domicon

um

this is going to be politically

incorrect

but venerable srivasti damaka

is gay in kind of a stereotypically gay

way in that he's kind of catty and
spiteful sometimes
and some of the books he's re he has
written

are along this vein where he's just
bashing away at orthodox terrible
buddhism

and some of the stuff i mean some of his
arguments

are you know i mean

there's some point to it like he's
talking about how

um

like asian monks are just lazy which is
largely true not all of them but a lot
of them are

but for example he thinks that having to follow all the rules of monastic discipline is just ridiculous but not following them strictly enough is also ridiculous it's like there's a certain goldilocks zone that he inhabits i assume

that is the correct you know the middle path of between strictness and excessive laxiness

also he was praising in that book

um like the new

ultra liberal western buddhism like

spirit rock type buddhism spirit rockism

which uh

i mean that was that was beyond the pale as far as i was concerned

um

so

yeah it's

i mean you might

get some benefit from reading broken

buddha

where he's mainly just

bashing his own religion

um

you can get some kind of insight into it

i suppose but

really i don't think that his uh he was

doing it entirely in good faith i'm

pretty sure he wrote another book about

christianity called beyond belief and he

didn't use his monk name i think he uses

layman's name in that one

and he starts off with an intro saying
you know this is not my purpose to bash
buddhist or to bash christianity
and then the whole rest of the book is
just bashing christianity so he's just
got this

penchant for

just

sniping at others apparently

at least that's the impression i get i
might be

mistaken in that

so i think i'll just move on to the next
question by jeremy here

and jeremy says concerning

padicha samupada the traditional

interpretation according to the
abhidhamma and commentaries is three
lifetimes while some monks favor the
moment-to-moment interpretation of the
twelve links

one could also use two lifetimes or one
lifetime for the 12 links what do you
think

so he's referring to dependent core
rising or it has many different names
condition genesis

they're all attempted renderings of
padicha sangupada which means something
like

a rising together
independence on

that would be like a very literal
interpretation of the word the term
patika samopano
and

it has been condensed down it was
condensed down at a very early
point in the development of buddhist
philosophy into

what's called the twelve nidano theory
which starts avija pachio let's see
sankhara i think

and there's just 12 links and i won't go
into the whole 12 links but
this this

leads to that which leads to that which
leads to that and eventually you get to
see

pasa is contact which leads to

vedana

which is

feeling

which leads to craving

and

that's that's like the weak link that's

where

the link between

feeling and craving that's where you're

supposed to

break the link and just break the whole

cycle of some sorrow

and

i've written about this before i've

talked about this before but i do not

think that the buddha originally taught
the 12 links

that there are proto-padica samupadas in
the texts like the central portion of
the saka panya suta in the digini kaya
which is very old also there's the
kalahawi wada suta in the atakawaga of
the sutonipata which is also extremely
old and they've got the same kind of
this leads to that which leads to that
which leads to that and it was
the cobbling together of these this
leads to that leads to that that
resulted in these
like the finalized 12 link theory but
even the nidhana suta of the the deegani
kaya which is the longest discourse

on the one subject of badichismopada
even that one is not orthodox following
the 12 links

so that one's maybe a little older they
hadn't finally worked out the whole 12
links yet

so i think it's academic to say
whether it occurs in three lifetimes or
two lifetimes or one lifetime or whether
it's all simultaneous um because i
really don't think

that the 12 nidano theory of benicio
semopada is authentic or let's just say
i'm skeptical of that

i think probably the older version
is this being that is this arising that

arising you know this not being that is
not this ceasing that ceases which is
another formula

um describing padichis hamapada and i
think that comes closer to the reality
and um personally i do think that it's
simultaneous like the the sam in
semupada

it's um

cognate to

like the latin con c-o-n or

greek

sin like s-y-n and english english

letters

and that means with or together

so

i think

it's it's like

this it's all simultaneous this whole
universe this whole world is just
everything is conditioning everything
else

so it's like uh

one of those tensegrity structures made
by or designed by buckminster fuller i
think he's the one who designed them
where it's just like this weird miracle
where

these this the sticks in this figure are
held together with elastic
you know so there's all pushing inwards
but they're not touching each other
somehow they're just sort of suspended

and each stick is is like conditioning
the position of all the other sticks you
know all the the tension is like
distributed throughout the thing so that
if you squish it flat it just pops back
into shape again it's really nice i was
i was amazed by those first time i saw
them

but i do think that it's like um

um like schopenhauer

wrote about uh

uh

causation like there's different kinds
of causation and one is just logical
causation just

um

i can't give a good example of it but um

logical causation i think that would be
pretty much what dependent core rising
is just like

um it's all conditional you know if you
say that this exists then you also have
to say that that exists it's like um
none of it is ultimately real

it's just this possibility

that's just sort of making itself seem
real by all the different possible
conditional

particles of it sort of
reinforcing everything else

it's hard to explain but um getting back
to the question here

um with regard to the traditional

interpretation

yeah orthodox theravada says it's

three lives or you can just say past

lives in general the present life and

then future lives in general

on john

told me that one

not too long ago

so um that's the orthodox explanation

but my unorthodox explanation is it's

all academic because

the 12 nidano theory probably was cooked

up

sometime during the 100 years of you

know just explosive

growth of buddhism before the first

schism

and you can find all kinds of examples
of proto padicha samupadas
in in the suta pitika

ah

so

i guess i'll just move on to the next
question

and this is from christopher

and christopher says what robes do you
like more the original rags or the
articulate design you explained

i think he's referring to the previous q
a where i was talking about

how monks robes are supposed to be made
and um

why a t-shirt would not qualify as like

an upper monk's robe why amongst robe
really has to be made according to this
elaborate method of making robes
and really

it's hard to say which i like more
because the original rags are just
extinct

those haven't been around for maybe
you know a thousand two thousand years
um

i knew this one monk

in burma a western monk the westerners
tend to be

uh more radical than the asian ones
and he tried to make

a robe out of just rags that he picked
up off the ground and that's the way

monks robes originally were in the
buddhist time you just find rags on the
ground you pick them up and you sew them
together

but it didn't work very well and people
were complaining about his robes because
you know you find a black shirt you're
not going to be able to dye it like a
yellowish brown color it's going to stay
black purple that kind of thing

um so he just had this it looked like
clown clothes or something

and also problem with rags is you live
in a fourth world country like burma
people don't throw away their shirts
until they're so far gone that it

doesn't even look like a shirt anymore
might be more holes than cloth

so

the

the way that it's made they're made now
i mean a kosher robe a robe that's made
according to the rules it started off
with the rags like you have to

um

when you connect two two rags together
you tack them together first

that's called bandana in poly then you
lay a strip of cloth over the seam and
then you sew the strip of cloth over the
seam to to reinforce the seam

partly because the claws sucked and
partly because thread sucked in those

days

so

um it was made the same way it's just
that nowadays it's just sort of a relic
you know it's it's kind of

uh like vestigial

because you're using good cloth that i
mean you don't need to cut it up into
little pieces and sew them back together
again but that's that's the way it's
done you get a big piece of cloth you
can't just wrap it around yourself you
have to cut it up in pieces and sew it
back together again according to this
this way of you know like
uh just stitching together what is it

tacking together two pieces of cloth and
then running a strip over the seam and
then sewing the strip down to reinforce
it

and then this

like the borders and everything

are sewn in a certain way

so

um

yeah i mean it's the way of sewing it
probably has not changed very much it's
just the cloth itself has changed a lot
and most

most monks will just wear factory made
robes even though the factory made robes
are not made according to the rules of
monastic discipline

but uh sometimes on the on the label
like a burmese monks robes you go to the
monk paraphernalia store and buy amongst
a set of monks robes to donate to a monk
and it might say you know made according
to vineya but no it's they're not made
according to one new

so

the original rags or the articulate
design you explain well the original
rags were sewn according to the art
articulate design so it's

um not so different

than uh christopher uh seems to have
assumed so i'll just move on to
christopher's second question

this is kind of a strange one

when you started meditating how cursed

were you

when i started i felt my muscles were in

hell my stomach malfunctioned and had

very bad hiccups

um

when i first started meditating it was

just a hopeless case i mean i just

you know it's sort of like trying to

ride a bucking bronco and getting thrown

off after five seconds

i was i was my mind is really kind of a

hyperactive mind like a lot of

westerners minds are i say i suppose

and um so that was the first problem but

um i did have sort of karmic

weird things happen like right when i
became a monk it was just everything was
going wrong i was getting poison ivy and
like

viral infections and and just allergies
and stuff is where i'd slip and fall and
scrape up my side it was just all these
things happening all at once just at
this

like this inflection point in my life
and i think that's pretty common

um

interestingly mary baker eddie in her
book on

science and health was key to the
scriptures which is like the second

bible for christian scientists talks
about how if you use christian science
to cure somebody often they'll get worse
before they start getting better and she
called it chemicalization you know it's
just sort of like this karmic
readjustment
that you know you've got to purge some
negativity in order to move up to the
next level
and so that that can happen you go to an
intensive retreat and in addition to
just the
you know the screaming pain in your knee
or your hip or wherever your back
i mean there just can be all kinds of
weird things that happen that you know

and to some degree it can be like your subconscious mind fighting against becoming enlightened because your ego doesn't want to die or something but also it can be like i said where there's just you're hitting a karmic inflection point where you've got to purge this negativity that's going to come out through the system before you can move up to the next the next level of of purity or subtlety or or whatever it is so uh when i first started meditating the main curse was just not being able to sit still for very long because my mind was so hyperactive

so the next question

is from mary spelled m-e-r-r-y

and this is an easy one i can answer

this one easy

how tall are you you seem pretty big

well

last time i was measured i'm pretty sure

i was six foot three or about 190

centimeters for those of you living in

barbarous lands that haven't switched

over to the feet and inches method yet

so next question

and now there's a jet plane flying

overhead

next question is from the arya swasti

project

and the arya swasti project says

greetings pagno regarding right view in
the eightfold path

right action right speech etc are clear
instruction to liberation as they are a
cause that will bring about an effect

but right view seems like an effect how
can someone have right view if they are
in delusion it seems to me that this is
kind of like telling someone

to just go be enlightened

the other directives can be at least
attempted in delusion and with

mindfulness but just to have right view
doesn't seem possible to even grasp
without some level of enlightenment

warm regards much respect sadhu

sadhu-sanu

well that's a good question and uh
yeah it i can see the point of this
question i've considered similar things
but really i mean the noble eightfold
path starts with right view
because right view is just it's like a
map or like
it's like elementary instructions on how
to get going and um you know right if
you just you know like the four noble
truths a belief you know that in karma
just like you know what goes around
comes around you know that if you do
evil evil will come back to you that you
know if you cause suffering it's going
to result in suffering for yourself

sooner or later that kind of a thing
that you know you should respect your
parents

that kind of a thing

so

when it has right view it's not talking
about enlightened right view

and you could argue that there really is
no enlightened right view that

when you become enlightened you don't
have any view you don't cling to any
view that

any of you that you might uh endorse as
a fully enlightened being it's just
skillful means

it might be just convenient to get you

through samsara where you're helping
somebody else to get started but right
view in in terms of the noble eightfold
path
is just
essentially just elementary enough
elementary philosophy to get you pointed
in the right direction and to inspire
you to start
start practicing
it's not understanding ultimate reality
by any stretch of the imagination
so i think i answered that one
succinctly
so i'll move on to the next one
rob495
says

have you ever met any monks who are
visibly
mentally ill

um

i haven't met any monks that were just
raging lunatics

but i have met some fairly nutty ones
and most of them were not
burmese

um there was one that i met that was
vietnamese

and there was another one that i met
that was like chinese malaysian

and i really don't have i mean i'm not
trying to badmouth these i'm just kind
of giving them as examples but um

like the chinese malaysian monk he would
just twice he did this to me he would
come to my room and then just stand
like in the door with his back to me
and he was just chronically
um i don't know if that would count as
mental illness but i mean he was like
too

embarrassed or shy to ask me for advice
or something so he'd just come into my
room and stand there with his back to me
and just wait for me to ask him what he
wanted and then it would be some kind of
a wild thing that i couldn't help him
with

um

i met a vietnamese monk who seemed to be

just terrified of lay people

i remember one time he was sitting out
in his in front of his cave eating his
lunch and a lay person came and he just
ran into his cave

leaving his bowl of food out in front of
the cave and just stayed in there for
the rest of the day just hours later his
bowl of food was still out there he was
still hiding

so there are i mean
monks

i mean monastic types i mean
you have to be kind of eccentric anyway
maybe if you're in a traditional
buddhist country in asia where it's just

the mainstream thing you know it's like
you know every family with a lot of kids
wants at least one kid to join the
monastery join the sangha that kind of
thing but for non
people born into non-buddhist cultures
then yeah there's a lot of kind of
eccentric types are attracted to it
because they're kind of on the fringe
anyway buddhism is kind of on the fringe
so
it does happen
but um
as i say i've never met any that were
just
like completely psycho
they uh they tended to be harmless

you know harmlessly

psychotic at worst

so i think i'll just move on to the next
question

also by rob 495

and he says and also what happens to
monks who are no longer able to look
after themselves

well

when monks are no longer able to look
after themselves the sangha looks after
them usually

um

when i was living

um in a monastery in

upper burma on the chinwen river there

was the only other monk who lived there
full time with me

was pretty old i mean he was getting up
when he finally died he was in his 80s
and he went through a period of sickness
where he just went back to the village
and lived with his some family members
who were taking care of him

but if you don't have family members
take care of you then it's the duty of
the sangha to take care of you and as
kind of a side note

um it's against the rules of monastic
discipline for a monk to write a will or
to have a will it's just that after he
dies

his bowl and his robes go to the monk

who is tending him in his final illness
and everything else that he owned is
just communal property of the sangha
so

i guess the correct answer is what
happens to monks who are no longer able
to look after themselves is that the
sangha i mean the brotherhood of monks
take cares of their own takes care of
their own

okay

next question

is from air rain

and airing says

jordan peterson said we live in a
universe that is characterized by moral

dimension and we understand that well
and that moral failings have
consequences and they are not trivial
they destroy you they destroy your
family they destroy your community
unquote how does this universal moral
dimension or archetype coalesce with
buddhist ethics well i mean it is pretty
much the same as buddhist ethics
although buddhist ethics are probably
way more subtle than jordan peterson's
ethics just because in in
terrible buddhism the ethics are so
finely tuned it's almost impossible to
do anything that's completely right
there's always going to be a certain
amount of

unskillful bad karma involved

so just like if you do a good deed but
you believe that you are doing a good
deed then you've got cell view which is
like delusion

and so there's a little bit of delusion
mixed in if this i am doing this

then already that's

delusion and maybe some conceit also

so

yeah i mean

this is just basic buddhist

ethics really

um moral dimension we understand that

well moral failings have consequences

and they are not trivial and moral

failings i mean they can be external or
internal and a lot of people will just
assume that

morals are external it's something that
you do

you know it's like if you punch an old
lady in the face

you kick a dog you steal somebody's
bicycle that's that's bad

but

to hate people that do that

is okay

but really it's like anger hate just

everything pretty much all of the

emotions other than just like selfless

love generosity you know benevolence

those are okay

but even benevolence if it's you know i
feel love for that person there's still
a little bit of delusion involved
because ultimately there's no difference
so

yeah i mean

like

there are some people some groups of
people that consistently do
reprehensible things from the point of
view of buddhist ethics some of these
people are buddhists
who do reprehensible things in
accordance with orthodox buddhist ethics
and then there are other people who
despise them for that

but the despising also is embracing a
moral failure

so

yeah it goes it goes both ways external
and internal i mean you've got external
ethics with regard to your

um

deliberate actions towards others

or just deliberate actions towards

not drinking alcohol or whatever it is

and then there's the internal ones of

just

not wallowing in

like negative mental states and that

sort of thing

so you have to be really careful i mean

it wasn't until i went to an ayahuasca

ceremony ironically that i realized just
the power of a single thought
that is every kind of thought you have
has just this palpable
i mean it's producing effects just just
by sitting there thinking it
and um
i mean really it's it's something not to
uh
not to consider a trivial thing even
though you just you might be
i don't know
criticizing someone in your heart
and i mean you're thinking you're not
doing any harm because you know you're
not taking it out on it but you're just

sitting there thinking it but still i
mean internally and it's sort of like a
toxic effect

so i mean

it's

it's really finely tuned and buddhism

really doesn't pull any punches in

regard to that sort of thing

so i guess i'll just move on to the next

question

and this is from gora gora gora who uh

changes his name every week or so

nasty every two weeks

for a while he was trumpton shire

gahapidi

and gora goragora says can you recommend

something an article length

can you recommend something article
length by yourself or another author
that summarizes the buddhist view of
ethics and karma as it relates to ethics
now the view of ethics and of karma as
it relates to ethics you have remarked
that buddhist ethics is at odds with
western utilitarian ethics and i would
like to understand the difference better
well regards to stuff that i have
written

i assume your best bet would be to find
it in

this book here i am hype and stuff
buddhist ethics buddhist practice
which is

the third book that i published
available on amazon the link is below
and there are articles in here like um
let's see
morality and observances
or um
accepting responsibility the ethics of
killing
the karma monster talking about
like a a general superficial explanation
of
of everyday karma that um
even a materialist would pretty much
have to accept
um
so yeah in the older blog that is no
longer on the internet i wrote more just

buddhist philosophy stuff i am writing
more of it now
although the purpose of
blog
that i'm got going
now
my second blog
is mainly just political incorrectness
um with a like a buddhist slant to it
politically incorrect buddhism
so
let's see something article linked by
yourself or another author that
summarizes the buddhist view of ethics
and karma as it relates to ethics with
regard to other authors i really can't

think of anything i'm sure odd john
tenissero has written on the subject
because he's written
like six gorillas books at this point
um

and the difference between buddhist
ethics and western utilitarian ethics
yeah that's i mean there's obvious just
a radical difference between the two
because western utilitarian ethics is uh
it's like volition

the importance of volition is
minimized or it's just almost irrelevant
you know there's no karma in western
utilitarian ethics whereas in buddhist
ethics it's
the the whole point of buddhist ethics

or like what it's based on is whether
it's making you
wiser and closer to enlightenment or
more foolish and farther away from
enlightenment i mean that's that's like
the
the what do you call it
the litmus test
for for morality and buddhism is it
getting you personally closer to
enlightenment or farther away from it
and it really doesn't even matter what
the effects are on others
you know it might be that
renouncing the world has your
has your mama in tears because she

wanted grandkids really bad

but i mean it's just kind of irrelevant

because it depends on your volitions

of course your your behavior towards

your mother your attitudes toward your

mother would be uh involved in ethics

too

but um yeah i'm sorry to hype hype stuff

but um if you wanted something article

length by myself

summarizes the buddhist view of ethics

um

maybe the article of morality and

observances

in this book

sorry then have to

sell something but

gotta gotta put food on the table

so i'll just move on to the next

question which is the last question and

it was asked just as i was sitting down

to do this video

but the last question just squeaked in

it's like uh in those action movies when

the big metal door is coming down and

like the guy just rolls underneath right

right before the door comes down

diane here did that

and diane says

what are simple everyday things that a

late person can do to get the most

benefit

which is a down-to-earth

kind of question for a person who's
living a worldly life
and uh

simple everything

simple everyday things a lay person can
do to get the most benefit
well

i mean keeping five precepts

i mean having a beer or a glass of wine
or something every once in a while i
mean you're not actually killing anybody
by doing that but with regard to like
not lying not stealing

you got a like a insect in your house
you catch it with a cup and a piece of
cardboard and let it go outside instead
of just squishing it

um

being generous

you know like sharing if you got more
than enough

i mean that's that's really a big one in
buddhism although of course in buddhism
wise guy monks have got that twisted
around into you know sharing to the
giving stuff to the sangha is going to
get you into heaven the easiest but

um

there's a sutta that says even feeding a
hungry animal you're going to get
benefit for a hundred future lives just
from feeding that hungry animal
just uh

yeah just cause more happiness and
unhappiness

just try to have like a positive
attitude i suppose

or at least a neutral one

but i mean for the for the

standard buddhist lay person keeping
five precepts you know no killing no
stealing

no

sensual misconduct

which is you know no promiscuity no you
know renting prostitutes no adultery
that kind of a thing

um

no lying or even like malicious gossip
you know criticizing people behind their

back about mouthing people behind their
back that kind of a thing or bad
mouthing to their face you know just
letting someone really have it
um

and finally the intoxicants which cause
heedlessness or a cloudedness of mind
now just you know try and keep five
precepts be generous if you've got more
than enough you know try to help others
if you can

even just putting bird seed out in your
backyard so the little tweety birds can
come and come and be happy

you know that's it's all good so just uh
yeah do good refrain from doing evil try

to purify your mind as much as you can
that was that is the teaching of the
buddhas

and

also uh

you know try and learn read books watch
youtube videos where you know somebody
who knows what they're talking about is
teaching

you know

basic dharma

and you might get new ideas for good
things to do

and try to have love in your heart

and that's it that's the last question

and so uh

i advise you if you want to uh

ask questions feel free to leave them in
the comments below
especially if you don't have access to
the discord server or
the subscribe star account
just leave them in the in the
comments below and
look at the url links
and you can find all sorts of things
and be happy

all right it's like this I did the Q a
yesterday I answered a whole bunch of
questions

sometimes with the light of the sun
blazing directly into my face causing me
to be uh transfigured in a sense
but um some of the questions didn't make
it onto the list there was this whole
other area where people would ask
questions and I skipped those questions
so when we get to the end of this when I
say be happy just disregard that
because I'm going to keep going
okay just just bear that in mind after I
say be happy don't just turn it off
because there's more questions after

that

and uh be happy

hello and welcome to episode 33 of

question and answer I am your host Ponyo

bossa

and my set director has advised me to

sit out here in the front yard because

it's a cloudy cool relatively

comfortable day with relatively few

biting parasitic insects

and I'm sitting in front of the pond

that maybe you can't see

that has goldfish and loaches that you

certainly can't see

and um I think I'm just going to start

answering questions because that's what

I'm here for and the first question is

from rui I believe

well I'm not sure if that's the correct
way of pronouncing his name

but we do what we can

and rui says here is a question that I

had been saving for my next encounter

with someone on the Mahayana path

on the body side of a path the

expression until samsara is empty is

often heard so who would be the last

being in samsara

and of course it's really hard to say it

may be that uh Mahayana mythology or

or something has got it figured out that

it's going to be such and such being you

know maybe Mara or something but um it's

really hard to say who the last being in
samsara would be it would have to be
either like the stupidest or the evilest
being in the universe

I mean that would be my guess although
really the question is academic because

I think the whole idea of emptying
samsara of suffering beings is um based
on some really faulty logic

it seems relatively straightforward that
this universe has no beginning from the
point of view of

Buddhist and also Indian cosmology

that there's just a beginningless

beginning this universe has been here

forever and if this universe has been

here already for an infinite length of

time

and there's still an infinite number of
suffering beings apparently then if an
infinitude of time has already passed
and there's still an infinite number of
suffering beings then there's always
going to be an infinite number of
suffering beings

so

it may be that new beings are being
spawned or some such

but um regardless of how it happens it's
just um it just seems unlikely to me
that some sorrow will ever be empty I
mean in an infinite Universe whatever is
possible is going to happen somehow or

another and

um

for there to be suffering beings is

always going to be possible I suppose

so

yeah

so my my answer I mean just based on my

own opinion my answer is just be there

is going to be no last suffering being

in samsara

and it's all kind of a an academic

question anyway

also because ultimately in Buddhism

there are no beings that um you know

uh a being is is really just kind of an

illusion

so let's just move on to the next

question also from rui

and this is kind of a a semi question

and rui says well I suppose the best way
to turn the following into a question is
to ask

so Ponyo what do you think of the
following

the issue with the the issue with the
mentioned Shambhala we are Beyond
causation thing oh he's referring he's
referring to a statement that I made or
somebody else made I think maybe it was
Brian Rue made it in a previous video
like a recent video

so um I'll get back I'll start over
the issue with the mentioned Shambhala

we are Beyond causation thing
stems from a rather mysterious teaching
that appears in Ying ma zogchen perhaps
in mahamudra transmission as well that
States from the primordial there is no
sequence between cause and effect
this sure makes sense as an armoring
against first cause and then it's
potentially creationist doctrines what I
find surprising is the sophistication of
the statement it was certainly not meant
as a viaticum for rustic cave dwelling
devotional yogis it seems to require a
novel mixture of conceptual grasp and
mystical
vision
I almost said mystical fiction caught

myself

so I mean the key here

the key thing that he wants my opinion

on is the statement quote from the

primordial there is no sequence between

cause and effect unquote

and so

I assume

what that statement means is that

Ultimate Reality is not causing the

illusion

um

the Ultimate Reality is not causing this

universe to seem to exist

and I agree with that and I've tried to

kind of touch on that when I'm

explaining the taravada Buddhist
conception of parichasangupada that
you've got
you know everything that exists in this
universe like like this is
kept in existence by causes and
conditions but those causes and
conditions are also kept in existence by
other causes and conditions so you have
this vast mutually conditioning web
of causes and conditions
and it's

I mean they're they're causing each
other in a in like a conditional or a
virtual or potential way
that ultimately they don't really exist
or in a way they're based on the ground

of Ultimate Reality

which

um

you can say is

you know infinite and formless

and again you could just go back to the

the uh

the simile of the block of marble where

Ultimate Reality is just this block of

stone you know metaphorically and it it

contains within itself all possible

statues

and they're they're really there you

know every single molecule is already in

the exact right place all you have to do

is just disregard the rest of the stone

and that's kind of the way this universe exists

but you're not saying that the stone causes the statue really

um so it's it's just really difficult to explain and uh according to Legend the Buddha himself

um just almost remains silent and just became a Hermit because he figured nobody was going to understand it and uh he wasn't far from the mark on that so

yeah I mean it's like

oh how do you how do you even explain it it's like this

this universe or of Maya as the Buddhist or as the Hindus would call it it's um

it's just conditionally real or
potentially or virtually real it's not
ultimately real and so it wouldn't have
like a real cause anyway
and Ultimate Reality is causeless you
know like

um in terravada Nirvana in most I think
in pretty much all Buddhism Nirvana is
unconditioned has no cause it doesn't
have any effects and so
obviously just from that point of view
um the absolute or the ultimate is not
going to be causing anything
but um yeah it's I really can't explain
it to you in an easy way
it just doesn't work so I'll just move

on to the next question

this is from

rim h-r-y-m

I want to pronounce it Hiram but I think
that might not be correct

this is kind of an interesting one

this question is

how did you meet Brian and what did you
think of him

I've known about Brian for years from
National Socialist circles and always
waved him off as a bad look for our
cause but then I discovered your talks
with him and reconsidered my former
position he is quite a wise person
albeit with a bit of Madness mixed in
so he's talking about Brian Roo and

those of you who watch my videos know
that

um I do

um do interviews with Brian sometimes
with additional guests including uh

lately venerable ajan punadamo

and um how did I meet Brian and what did
I what did I think of them

well the first time I interacted with
Brian Rue

I had just come back to America

in 2011 and I was staying in Bellingham
Washington

and I was sort of optimistic and naive
at the time

and I sent

emails out to Buddhist teachers in the area like within a 100 mile radius and that included like the Vancouver BC area and also like the Seattle area and

I Brian Rue was one of the Dharma teachers in uh in Vancouver BC or in that area

and um he was still like pretty much of a normie mainstream Dharma teacher at the time he he hadn't been red pillled yet

and um he hadn't uh embraced the National Socialist cause yet that I'm aware of

and so anyway I just uh sent him an email you know saying you know I'm in

the area I'm a monk with you know so
many years of experience and
um you know I'm willing to offer myself
as a kind of resource
and I got a polite email back from Brian
saying that you know he's just kind of
fending for himself
and he really just doesn't have the the
resources to have visiting teachers or
anything and that was that was it for
several years
and then um around 2017 18 thereabouts
um apparently somebody who liked my blog
um
contacted Brian and told him that you
know he should consider me as

you know some kind of Buddhist resource
or something and at the time by that
time Brian had been red pillled and had
started

um the Thule Society or he had sort of
taken over the Thule Society or
something which is sort of a a nazi-ish
um kind of website

and he contacted me asking if I would be
willing to be the spiritual leader of
the Thule Society
and

um if you look on my blog I mean this is
a few years ago

but it was like my answer to the Thule
Society where I was

um you know respectfully declining

um becoming spiritual leader of this
group but

um

somehow from there on

uh we started interacting and I started
doing videos with Brian that was sort of
how my video career

uh started was uh just Brian and Brian
and I doing videos we did probably about
200 of them

and um most of them aren't even on my
website in order to find

all of them or most of them you'd have
to go to Brian's bit shoot Channel and
he's got a a playlist called Buddhist
among truthers

that um consists mainly of videos

between him and me

but so that's how I met him but what did

I think of him and we've never actually

met in person not in this lifetime

anyway

but what did I think of him

um well I think

what uh Hiram or Haram a rim says about

him at the very end here he is quite a

wise person albeit with a bit of Madness

mixed in

um yeah he's

he's obviously a sincere and good person

and he's got wisdom he's a sincere

Buddhist he knows more about Buddhism

than most Buddhist teachers I think

and um I mean he's kind of eccentric
he's got some strange ideas but then
again

in some ways uh he and I get along so
well because my father was kind of
similar my father was a bit on the
eccentric side he was very much into the
occult as he called it you know
experimenting with like Witchcraft and
and ESP and hypnotic past life
regressions and so forth

so

um I can get along with people like that
fairly easily and um there's just some
sort of uh
what do you call it

hmm I can't think of it the proper word
but there's just a kind of resonance
between us we get along well
and um I consider him a friend
so I mean I I really
don't take extremely seriously some of
his causes
but um that's okay you know
so how did I met Brian we met this
essentially he contacted me wanting me
to be the spiritual leader of the school
society and what did I think of him
um yeah I thought he had some strange
ideas but nothing prohibitive from for
um with regard to us interacting and
making videos and so forth and it has
been very productive it's been a good

experience

so

I think I'll just move on to the next

question also from

he whose name I cannot pronounce h-r-y-m

and uh hrym's second question

is did your meditative practices make

you more detached from pain I've been

showering in cold water for quite some

time and have grown accustomed to this

type of uncomfortable sensation but

lately I've tried to pierce through my

hand with a knife and found myself being

unable to do so I pressed the point of

the knife against my flesh but couldn't

bring myself to overcome the rising pain

and tear through

granted this is quite this is a quite

dramatic way of overcoming it what is

your experience with Detachment from

Pain I'm going to try meditating on pain

whilst pressing the knife against my

hand

well

I'm not sure that my meditative practice

has made me more detached from Pain

partly because my father was just a

really a macho He-Man kind of guy and

one of his mottos was a little pain

never hurt anybody and he was very

detached from Pain already and part of

it may be genetic I can tolerate pain

fairly well better than most I assume

uh with regarded showering in cold water
I've done it before but I I don't like
it it's just kind of icky
that's not really pain anyway
so

um I will say that meditative practice
have made me more detached from nausea
which is um

I mean just the very existence of nausea
whoever I mean it's a very good argument
against creationism I mean no God who
created nausea is going to be a good God
it's just really icky it's worse than
pain in my opinion

and I found like if I try to be mindful
just practice mindfulness I'm feeling

nauseous for whatever reason

and

you practice mindfulness of it you know

you don't fight against it you don't

struggle against it you just kind of you

know this is how it feels you know I'm

feeling this and I found that at least

half of the misery of nausea is just the

resistance against it

that if you just practice mindful

acceptance of the nauseous feelings it

reduces The Misery by about half at

least maybe two-thirds

which is nice

so

I assume with pain most people that

suffer because of pain well all people

who suffer because of pain it's not the pain itself it's the resistance against the pain it's the desire for the pain to stop

because pain and suffering are two entirely different things I think a lot of people don't realize this and in the west we're pretty much programmed to believe that even being discomfort just being uncomfortable or inconvenienced is just a necessary cause of suffering and so you've got to buy the the color-coded Ziploc bags or whatever it is they're trying to sell you in order to decrease your suffering when obviously just being detached having a few desires is going

to be a much better way of not suffering
than uh just getting anything you can to
cause you to be less uncomfortable and
less inconvenienced

so I've addressed the question here I
think but I would also like to address
this part about trying to derive a knife
through his own hand as a way of
practicing resistance to pain

um yeah I think that is really

um it's not the middle path you know the
Buddha's first sermon according to
tradition

he's talking about the middle path
between self-indulgence and self-torture
and stabbing a knife all the way through
your hand would probably qualify as

self-torture

um a better way of dealing with and just
learning to accept pain go barefoot I
mean I did that I worked for for many
years I wore shoes on average maybe
twice a year

and um just walking around on gravel is
uh it's a good way of

um experiencing pain and giving you the
opportunity to mindfully detach from the
pain

because really pain and suffering are
two entirely different things

but as Shakespeare said I think it was
there never was philosopher who could
endure the toothache patiently and I've

I've uh you know I've learned from
experience the sore foot is much easier
to deal with than a sore tooth to some
degree it's just farther away from from
the the brain or something
but um toothaches are really
yeah they're up there with nausea as uh
something that is
best avoided if you can avoid it
so I think I'll just move on to the next
question here and this is from the Arya
sewasti project
and the Aria swasti project says
greetings Ponyo when one becomes a monk
I understand that they give up all
belongings even future inheritances
since you were a monk for 30 years and

only recently have become a layperson
how are you planning for old age do you
have enough to retire what is going to
happen when your body gives out at the
sheet metal shop my wife is from
Thailand and my girlfriend is from Laos
one owns a shop and one is an accountant
both are devoted Buddhists and thinking
I'm thinking of moving everyone in the
same place and quitting work when the
time comes
I'm still relatively youngish now
but I'd really rather that be sooner
than later is that wrong
guards much respect sadhu sadhu sadhu
well this like the the previous question

is it's like two parts both of which I think I should address even though only the first part is the question

um

it is true I mean I didn't have anything set by my I have almost no family connections so I was just on my own when I when I dropped out of the monk Hood generous people made some donations to help me get started so I had

Maybe

six or seven thousand dollars to get started on

and um

I'm doing fine at present I'm not making a whole lot of money and as a monk I was making pretty much

zero money

uh

so really

I have little choice

but to have faith in my own Karma like

like in Christianity give no thought for

tomorrow you know what you will eat

where you will sleep and um I've been

doing that most of my life

just uh I mean you can kind of compare

it to the grasshopper and the Ant where

I've been the Grasshopper And sooner or

later harsher reality is going to come

down on my head but nevertheless both

the Jesus of Nazareth and go to My

Buddha taught that you really should

just put yourself at the mercy of the universe and

um you know God will provide and I really don't have much choice but to accept that and continue to live by it it may be someday that uh I'll strike traction with more people and uh get more support

in addition to just uh working as a uh at a sheet metal shop

but um

yeah I mean that's that's really I don't have much choice

I've got a retirement account started

but I mean if I retired today I'd

probably be making about five dollars a month which um

is not even enough for coffee really
so uh what is going to happen when my
body gives out at the sheet metal shop
just gonna have to wait and see
um

so that's that's really my answer to the
to the question part but then the second
party's talking about how his wife and
his girlfriend

um both have good jobs apparently and
both are devoted Buddhists and
um the Arya sawasdi project is thinking
of moving both his wife and his
girlfriend into the same place
and just letting them support him
um

yeah well I mean from a Buddhist point
of view I mean there is

um you know sensual misconduct is
something to be avoided

um but I mean if he's going to be moving
his girlfriend in with his wife then
apparently the wife knows about it and
uh he assumes at least that she will
accept the situation and

um

although Buddhism disapproves of
adultery

nevertheless it does accept

bigamy or polygamy

and so like for example the Buddha's own
father

uh married two sisters

um

so

in in Buddhist countries like Thailand
and I think also in Burma for a man to
marry more than one wife is allowable
so that wouldn't count as adultery
apparently unlike in uh Christian
tradition

so

um so long as it's sort of like two
wives

then it's probably still
more or less okay depending on you know
the the actual volitions involved in the
three people involved
so yeah I mean if you can get it to work

out and

and it works then

I guess

so we'll just move on to the next

question

and this is from word Flex or weird Flex

w-y-r-d Flex

gotten some difficult

some difficult names here

Word flags

okay so word flex's first question here

is how did you go about learning poly

did the monastic set aside time for

instruction or was this something you

had to pick up on your own

well when I was a junior Monk

um I did have a senior monk who was

teaching me Paulie and we were using two textbooks and it's by a sinhalese monk I don't remember his name I want to say something like Buddha data but it maybe it wasn't Buddha data maybe it was and it was so the beginning poly course and the intermediate poly course there was also an advanced polychorus but we didn't get into that um

and uh yeah we just did lessons which caused me to learn about as much Paulie as you'd pick up in junior high school and like learning Spanish or something and then from then on I just started reading polytext with a dictionary on

hand

and would consult

um

poly grammars just to get weird and

weird like verb let's see you uh

uh word declensions that kind of thing

you know and uh

so I got I got fairly good that way just

sort of get like a bare Foundation of

poly grammar and syntax and some

vocabulary and then you start reading

polytexts preferably the easier stuff

like I was mainly interested as a junior

monk in monastic discipline and luckily

for me the books of monastic discipline

are very straightforward easy to read

in in the suit as sometimes you get into

like poetry or or like obscure word

forms you know strange grammar so forth

which is more difficult

although I eventually started reading

the suit is in Pali also

but um yeah that's how I did it and I'm

sorry I don't remember the the name of

the uh the venerable author who wrote

the Pauli books although I guess in the

west D polygramor to go to is by KR

Norman and I don't remember what it's

called but no not KR Norman it was AK

Warder

so AK Warder wrote a poly grammar that

I've heard some criticism of it but then

I've heard people say that it's just

excellent

so

this is this is getting into uh word
flex's second question here so I might
as well read it how would you recommend
a layperson go to go about doing the
same was there a standardized tag switch
the monks use for learning that you
could recommend

so

right now I have one poly grammar which
is probably been out of print for a
hundred years Charles duroc cell's
polygrammer I've got like the first
edition of it printed and published in
like 1910 or something
I found it at a used bookstore in Burma

so probably that one's not going to help
you much unless you can find it
somewhere

um

that that one by the the sinhalese monk
that I might I personally learned Paulie
from I mean that's good if you can find
it maybe by Buddha data but I'm not sure
but um AK water is the one to go to for
English-speaking westerners so I guess
you would start with AK water that would
be the easiest one to find and it has
received some praise like by ajan taniso
I think ajanta nissro learned poly uh
originally by studying AK Waters poly
grammar so

um that would probably be your best bet
I would assume and then just start
reading easy texts like um if you're not
interested in monastic discipline
um like the jyotica stories
things like that they're fairly easy
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from M Scott
and M Scott says
what is the likelihood that Siddhartha
godama actually existed is there any
solid proof to show this
well

um

I've I've written about this recently
and we've done videos I've talked about
this subject to some degree

and the thing is anyone who lived in
ancient times I mean there's no proof
that they existed that's why you've got
people saying the Buddha never existed
you got people saying that Jesus never
existed

but uh I can I consider it likely

um

there are like uh stupas like where his
relics are supposedly enshrined and I
mean that in itself doesn't mean very
much I've seen so many fake relics you
go to Burma and there's entire like
museums little little hokey museums like
near a pagoda or something and there's
just all these relics of

of Buddha not only our Buddha but like
previous mythological Buddhas who lived
in prehistoric times and famous Saints
and so forth and most of them are fake
um most of what are called relics in
Burma or dot Dole are little balls
they're like little white balls that can
be found in the in the remains of a
cremated corpse
and uh I've heard the theory my
sweetheart said that it's probably like
gallstones or or something like that
but
um that's considered to be not only in
in Burma but in other Buddhist countries
more or less proof that the person was a
fully enlightened being but I have seen

the Peshawar relics
and the pressure War relics which
ironically the Burmese ignore
um they've got like a pedigree that you
can trace back to the time of the Buddha
where after the Buddha died his he he
was cremated
and um there's still a a big burial
mound stupa kind of structure in uh
uh
where was it that I saw that in India
I'm having a mental block it was where
the Buddha it was near where the Buddha
died
so there's still like the burial mound
for uh one share of his relics that are

there in uh it's not sarnath

I'm sorry I'm having a mental block

but um

anyway

uh apparently the emperor Ashoka broke

open some of these and divided the uh

the relics of the Buddha

into a larger number of of stupas and

then the uh the kushan king kanishka did

the same thing he broke open more and

and it's going to spread out uh he made

more uh pagodas so that the Buddhists

could worship the relics of the Buddha

more easily and he built um

a huge capital city for his Empire in

what is now peshawar or near Peshawar

in Pakistan

and he built a huge Pagoda there it was considered to be one of the wonders of the world at the time and um and

so what happened was when the Muslims invaded they just completely destroyed it but there was a burial like a a shrine chamber A Relic chamber underground and during the British colonial times British archaeologists dug it up and they found like a golden casket inside the golden casket was a crystal like a little Crystal vial and had the name of kanishka engraved on it and it had little pieces of burnt bone and um there's a good chance that

kanishka would have tried very hard to
get like genuine relics from one of
these older Relic Chambers

so I mean that's about as good of
evidence as you're going to find other
than just

um

you know I mean the Buddha had like a
personality that you can

you can see that he's not just pure
mythology

or if if he is sort of fictional then it
would be

um the creation of one or very few
people just getting the basic details of
his personality worked into the into the
earliest poly texts

so

I think it is very likely that the
Buddha existed and that um Jesus of
Nazareth existed and I think there
probably was even an original version of
like Hercules and achilles
um Rama and Krishna
and um they were just ancient Heroes
that uh got methodologized got lots and
lots of stories cooked up about them and
they got conflated with other beings
especially the Greeks you know their
worship of Hercules they'd
um you know settle in some foreign land
where they had a hero that was similar
to Hercules they would say well it was

Hercules he just traveled to this area
and um

so

um yeah it's it it's very likely the
Buddha really existed but the name
Siddhartha which is here in the question
what is the likelihood that Siddhartha
godama actually existed

um Siddhartha is not found in the
earliest text that's a later accretion
like the name of godama's his wife the
Buddha's wife also there there are
different versions of it in different
texts

um so the Siddhartha part might just be
mythology you know it's it's it means
something like you know the goal

attained which is you know suitable
symbolic name to give to him but the
gotema part that's probably
authentic that is it's a family name the
godama is a it's a clan name and it
means something like cow Tamer or cow
cow herd something like that and um
it is true that it was primarily a
brahmana name like a Brahmin clan name
I'm not sure how
um

the Buddhist family got named that
but um like uh the Buddha will call his
cousin Ananda godama
and uh his stepmother was mahapajapati
go to me because like a female godama

would be a go to me

so

in all likelihood he was a member of the
gotema clan in uh what is now Nepal

uh and uh also the the shakya tribe the
gotima it would be like a family and

then the the shakya would be like the
tribe that he belonged to the the

ethnicity

so yeah it's likely but there's no way
of really proving it

so

you might as well I mean

I mean technically there's no way of
proving that we exist when you really
want to get down to it

so I'll just move on to the next

question which is from surfan
and surf fan says when's the next
installment of beauties and meditation
and that's referring to my blog I've
I've made about three installments of
Beauties in meditation our beauties of
meditation and it's essentially
beautiful young women sitting in
meditation usually in uh the full Lotus
position and uh often in a state of
nature which means you know they're not
wearing any clothes
and uh I have enough pictures to make
another one
although I do have a sweetheart now that
I'd have to run it past her to get I

know I don't want her getting mad at me
other people get mad at me that's fine
but when you're when you're living with
a woman you have to you know keep her in
in Good Humor almost all the time if
possible

but I mean theoretically I could I could
post it next week

probably won't but I could

any of you are interested you can just
look on the um pictorial tag

of my uh of my blog and you'll find the
first three installments

because I mean the whole philosophy at a
time I was a celibate monk at the time
that I posted these installments of
beauties and meditation and in a way it

was sort of combining The Best of Both
Worlds for me you know it's like the
beauty is a femininity combined with you
know the the profundity of spirituality
you know so like uh

I don't know

that that was that was my rationale time
so I'll just move on to the next

question and this is from Air rain

and air rain posted a a link to a video
that I watched

or I watched a similar video on the same
family

and Irene says in this video breakfast
with the Whitakers

um depicting a completely impoverished

and somewhat disabled hillbilly Family
on YouTube how would you describe their
karma from a Buddhist perspective

seems to me conventional First

Impressions may be deceiving how about
the karma of the gentrified California
couple who traveled there to film them
and any of you who are interested I'll
probably forget to post a link under
this video but there is a YouTube
channel called Soft White underbelly
and just look up the Whitakers spelled
with two T's

w-h-i-t-t-a-k-e-r Whitaker

on the soft white underbelly Channel and
you'll find a number of uh videos where
he is visiting this family of

um I mean

on the title of the video has inbred
family

and they're they're in West Virginia

they're Hillbillies and it's it may be

that a brother and sister got married or

something because this whole family is

really kind of genetically messed up

and uh some of them are just like

like literally what used to be called an

idiot like with an IQ below 40. like one

of them just makes like mostly makes

just like barking dog noises and there's

one woman who's almost completely mute

and they live in squalor and just this

run-down Shack

and uh I think Aaron is asking the question because they seem happy or at least like like the one that barks like a dog I mean he's just cheerful and and you know you don't see him really unhappy about anything

and I mean that's that's true of like a lot of mentally disabled people

um you know they seem happy almost all the time for that matter even like animals you know they seem relatively well composed most of the time

so Aaron is asking what kind of karma would cause somebody to be born into this kind of a family with you know their eyes pointing in different directions and half of them at least

half of them being severely mentally

and uh

she seems to think because they're

relatively happy that it's not

necessarily Bad Karma

and um

from the Buddhist point of view yeah

it's bad karma that caused him to be

that way even though they might seem

relatively happy just as it's bad karma

to be uh some kind of a dog

like living in the west where you're

like a Pampered Shih Tzu or something

um still I mean

because

your Consciousness is so limited you

really cannot grow spiritually uh very
much anyway and now the sun is out it's
not a cloudy day anymore so it looks
like my face is just glowing pure white
in a skeletal fashion

huh

yeah

anyway but I mean

it's sort of like someone with

Alzheimer's or whatever it's just you're
locked in to

a mental state with no exit you're just
stuck that way

and that's not good karma and I mean

even the squalor that they live in and
just

they obviously have physical issues in
addition to mental ones that yeah even
though they are unaware
of

you know how things could be so much
better for them

still from a relative position they're
they're worse offs than the average the
average person

and I've got the sun just right in my
face right now

so

yeah I mean even just with regard to the
limitations of their position and their
just the low Vibe of their Consciousness
they they really don't have much
opportunity at all to uh make any kind

of

significant spiritual progress other than just working off Bad Karma and that's kind of what the Hindus um traditionally feel about people with very serious

um like mental retardation or deformations that kind of a thing they're considered to be blessed by the gods because they're they're working off really bad karma they're paying off like a very big uh karmic debt

and so in that sense they're making some kind of progress that it's not all bad but um with regard to to uh like enhancing the quality of their own

Consciousness or so forth the guy with
the IQ of 35 who just barks like a dog
most of the time

um yeah I don't think that he's going to
be making much progress that you'd be
better off just as like a mainstream
Normie if only because you have more
potential at least

to improve your situation

so I'll just move on to the next
question

and this is from Noah what do you think
about the Lotus Sutra Noah says

and I have to admit I mean I have read
the Lotus Sutra but I haven't read it
since I was maybe my early 20s so it's

been a while it's been more than half my

life ago so I just barely remember parts
of it almost the only Parts I remember
is the simile of the burning house
I remember I think it was the the
Pacheco Buddhas or a kind of vehicle
it's it's strange how the Mahayana
Buddhists have worked out maybe like
redefined the Pacheco Buddha
and uh they have this simile the house
is on fire and in order to lure people
out of the house so they won't burn to
death in the Buddha
like
create through skillful means different
ways
of attracting people out of the house

and I believe it was some kind of like
fancy looking carts which are Vehicles
so he's got mahini on a cart which is
pulled by I don't remember what goats or
something then he's got the Pacheco
Buddha cart pulled by deer and then he's
got you know the Mahayana the superior
vehicle supposedly pulled by some you
know more exalted kind of animal that I
don't remember

and aside from that simile almost all I
remember about the Lotus Sutra is there
was some kind of uh

some kind of Mantra at the end

so I really I don't remember it very
well at all but

um just based on my studies of you know

what early Buddhism was like it's it's
obviously late it's obviously
anachronistic

um it was written centuries after the
time of the Buddha

um

and it was written I mean it wasn't just
it wasn't like the early texts that were
memorized back because it was like a
mostly a pre-literate society by the
time Mahayana came along literacy was
more established writing down of
scriptures had become uh better
established

and uh yeah I mean it's a late text it's
got some profundity to it if I remember

correctly but is there's also just lots
of sort of
religious propaganda and uh you know
Mahayana is is true or the best Buddhism
and so forth
and um
yeah but it's it's taken very seriously
there are a few schools of Buddhism
um I can't remember if it's inichi Ren
is one of them where like in like part
of the Buddhism is just or like the main
point of the Buddhism is just reciting
as a way of uh if not attaining
salvation at least getting into a pure
land in the west
is like homage to the Lotus Sutra
instead of reading the Lotus Sutra

apparently they just worship it

like a lot of people have done to the

Buddha himself or to Jesus of Nazareth

you know instead of following what they

teach you just worship them as as gods

or something

oh the sun is like directly in my face

now

so I'll just uh move on to the next

question

unfortunately I I don't remember the

Lotus Sutra well enough

to uh

to really give a more detailed answer to

it

so this question is from anahita

and if I kind of squint or get down in
the shade here

I can I can read this I have a question
that is off topic what's the Buddhist
explanation for Chopin howery and evil
if I have understood schopenhauer
correctly then he argued that someone
who harms others by stealing their
possessions cannot necessarily be
considered evil because that behavior is
usually rooted in greed which in turn is
rooted in fear or some someone murdering
another person
because of jealousy that too is a fear
reaction no matter how much harm would
result from that such a person is not
evil then if I remember correctly he

gave an example of a person that would fit in the category of evil and he described such a being as having the want to harm others for the sake of it this sounds to me like sadism a sadist inflicts suffering on others not because he is motivated to gain something out of it but out of sheer perverted pleasure I would actually agree with that definition of evil and if that is indeed what he was arguing then true evil is an absolute Rarity in this world since most bad Deeds happen due to a mixture of confusion lack of self-awareness and sometimes outright desperation my problem with that is that Buddhism

according to my knowledge doesn't really
give a satisfying explanation for the
presence of such a state of mind

Buddhist as well as many Hindu texts
that I have read even many antinomian
ones like the cool Laura Nava

Tantra call all kinds of things evil
ignorance isn't evil not following
Dharma isn't evil but there is no
mention of the existence of sadism which
to me is the only thing that truly
deserves the category evil everything
else is just confusion in my opinion
even the sewers of Hindu mythology
aren't truly evil in that sense the
neoplatonic explanation of evil is the
most unsatisfying religions like

Christianity would probably say that the sadistic person in question must be possessed somehow by a malevolent Spirit but how does Buddhism explain this if possible I would also like to hear the opinion of ajan punadama on this is not here at present so we're gonna have to bypass the venerable monk for the time being but yeah I've I've pointed this out before we've done we've done videos on schopenhauer and evil or just evil and I would point out that schopenhauer's definition of evil is is the most

clear-cut I think where he's saying that
you know like like anahita here says
that just someone who is just absolutely
ruthless like a sociopath will just
trample anyone who gets in his way to
attain his goals

is um

they're not evil they're just greedy or
selfish

whereas schopenhauer says that somebody
who

um

I mean a truly evil person is someone
who causes suffering just because he
enjoys causing suffering you know it's
like causing suffering is its own reward
you know it's that's like the whole

point of it

and uh I mean it is there is mention of
that

in the polytext I mean there's ill will
which I think

um for the most part would uh

it would include that anyway it might
not be limited to that but it would
include that but of course Buddhism
it's um

it has a different definition of evil
and I mean it's evil is a word uh in
poly it's called Papa

and um

like like Mara is called the evil one
and in a way Mara I mean Mara in a way

is

kind of along the lines of

schopenhauer's definition of evil and

that he's mainly just interested in

keeping everybody in samsara

and that if if you can't be bad if you

can't like lure you into being bad he'll

lure you into being good because you're

stuck in samsara either way and you

don't escape from evil or you don't

escape from suffering I mean

so I mean there is mention of it in the

in the poly text in early Buddhism

but

um nevertheless Buddhism does have a

much wider definition of evil and that

you know just any kind of causing

suffering to others

um especially if it's like deliberately

volitional a volitional Act of causing

suffering to others that uh that you

know you're causing suffering and you

you don't care or you like causing

suffering

um yeah obviously that's going to be bad

karma and I mean even if you're talking

about sadism I mean sadism can also be a

rooted in you know some other kind of

motive like somebody like the the

emperor Tiberius who liked watching

people get tortured to death I guess Mao

Chairman Mao in China also enjoyed

watching people getting tortured

and uh

I mean it could be rooted in just misery
you know you've got like this unbearable
some kind of misery or angst or or
sorrow or something inside of you that I
mean you can't be happier than others
unless you make others miserable and
then you can sort of feel happy by
comparison you know at least I'm I'm
happier than that person there
and uh you know I think there's a lot of
that just in in just hatred
um some some of it racial hatred that
kind of thing it's like a person is
unhappy and so they want to inflict
misery on someone else just so that they
will be relatively happy even if they're

not you know like absolutely happy
at least in comparison to the person
who's getting lynched or whatever
so

yeah I mean it is touched upon like ill
will would be sort of schopenhauer and
evil you know wanting to cause suffering
to others

um but there's always going to be other
factors involved even in schopenhauer
and evil I assume

uh Mara I suppose would be one of the
best examples in Buddhist
um in the Buddhist texts

you know as as a kind of sadist he's
he's a subtle sophisticated sadist

living in a high heaven realm but uh
nevertheless I mean his whole
his whole like agenda is keeping as many
beings as possible from escaping samsara
thereby escaping his his power and
thereby just staying in misery
or or at least uh not freeing themselves
from suffering

so

but I do think that schopenhauer's
definition of evil is is a valid one but
that doesn't mean that evil can Poss can
only have one possible meaning
and uh I think like the Buddhist
uh broadening of the of the term into to
including you know all sorts of things
um would also is also valid

words can have more than one meaning

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from Fred

Fred says I am intrigued by the

connection between good acts and

metaphysics or bad acts what is the

reservoir is it cheetah

and he asked this question not uh in the

usual channels but it was a comment to a

different

video where we were talking about I

think it was Buddhism versus Atheism

and uh one of us mentioned

that's uh Buddhist ethics are not based

on what most religious ethics are based

on most religions will say you know X is

good and Y is bad because God says so
whereas Buddhism doesn't have a god
decreeing what is right and wrong it's
just based on you know deep psychology
and human nature so that anything that
brings you closer to enlightenment
can be called good anything that takes
you farther away from Enlightenment can
be called bad or potentially even evil
so

anyway the main question here is

what is the reservoir

and by that he means the reservoir of
your karma your good and bad you know
the acts or or like the momentum of that
and it wouldn't be cheetah which is
consciousness it's volition it's

from the Buddhist point of view the
reservoir so-called is just the the
stream or the the the momentum of your
mental states which is change enough so
it's karma

karma is the reservoir so to so to speak
although

um it's not like it's

like stored in a tank somewhere you know
like the

um the yogachara Buddhists had what was
called the Alaya

which is the storehouse Consciousness
and that they had like you know all of
your good and bad karma was kind of
stored somehow in this one sort of

psychic Place uh most Buddhism including
terrible Buddhism doesn't Avail
themselves of any kind of reservoir
really it's just
the momentum of your mind is I mean
that's like a vector and there's all
different kinds of vectors kind of in
you know participating in this but
there's like this one main
uh Vector of momentum going and that's
that's your karma and it's all right now
in a sense
because in terravada Buddhism all that
exists is the present moment
it's it's sort of like a cartola talks
about you know all that exists is now
so

that that's really it it's just the the
momentum of your mental states that is
the reservoir and that's why in
theravada Buddhism after you die the
very next moment you've got to take
existence in a different as a different
being

uh just because that's that's really all
there is is this momentum of karma
that's going from one life to the next
and so there can't be a gap it's just
the very next moment after Consciousness
ceases in this in this body it's gonna
start up somewhere else
so the reservoir would just be Karma
and so I'll move on to the next question

from Diane

and Diane always asks her questions like
right at the right right before usually
the very day that I do a q a video
she'll she'll get you know advised you
know if you want to ask questions this
is your last chance so then she asks
questions

so Diane's first question is

so many religions say that if you don't
follow that religion then you are damned
or cannot be saved is Buddhism like this
um no Buddhism is not like this

um to some degree slightly for example
theravada Buddhism which is the kind of
Buddhism that you know I was ordained in
that I I know most about

uh it freely admits that any good person
can go to heaven

it doesn't matter what religion you
follow so long as it's not like a really
pernicious one

you know they have been bad religions
but you know human sacrifice and that
kind of a thing but um

any person who's who's like a good
person you know who tells the truth and
loves their neighbor and doesn't steal
or or murder or rape and that kind of
thing then they can go to heaven

regardless of what religion they belong
to but terravonna does claim a kind of
Monopoly on full Enlightenment so

according to orthodox theravada

if you're not a Buddhist you can go to
heaven but if you're not a Buddhist you
can't become fully in line

and I am skeptical of that I would not
be surprised if there have been more
enlightened Hindus than enlightened her
a lot of Buddhists I'm just putting it
out there I'm being a heretic but it
wouldn't surprise me I wouldn't be
surprised if some Roman Catholic saints
like Saint John of the Cross were fully
enlightened even though

um superficially at least they had the
wrong View

and uh even in the the polytext you know
there's like Bahia

who was a non-budist philosopher
and he heard about the Buddha he heard
that the Buddha was fully enlightened so
he just took off walking to meet the
Buddha and he gets to where the Buddha
was and when Bahia walked a long way he
walked from like the the west coast of
India all the way to the Ganges Valley
you know where the Buddha was staying
like around uh sawati or something and
he gets there he immediately you know
wears the Buddha and they say well he's
going for alms right now just wait and
he'll be back in a little while and he
couldn't wait even for that he goes to
the to the town or the village where the

Buddha was walking for alms and says
please teach me the Buddha says you know
I'm I'm walking for alms you know can
you wait a little bit and he says no I
don't know when I'm going to die I need
to know now so finally the Buddha gives
him this cryptic sort of koan like
um

like a little sermon that lasts you know
maybe 20 30 seconds to say the whole
thing and that was it that's all it took
for buying and he became enlightened
so he wasn't ordained as a monk and I
mean technically he wasn't even really a
Buddhist although he clearly had a lot
of faith in what the what the Buddha was
teaching him

but um yeah getting back to the question

um

carabata Buddhism says that if you're a good person

you can go to heaven regardless of your religion but only theravada Buddhism or just Buddhism in general

um

only only that is like a vehicle to Nirvana or full Enlightenment but

um I'm skeptical of that and I do think that uh members of other religions so long as you know they're detaching you know it doesn't matter I mean if you've got wrong view but you're not detached to it I mean it's just a

cultural thing you just kind of stuck
with it like Saint John of the Cross he
lived in 16th Century Spain so I mean if
if he wasn't a Christian he was going to
have the Inquisition on him
so I mean he really didn't have much
choice that was like your only choice
but they practiced the same kind of
meditation techniques you know like
samata and also mindfulness
and uh

and I I he was a master of of Janna in
my opinion just reading his his writings
and I think there's a good chance maybe
he was wiser than the founder of his own
religion he may have been fully
enlightened he would have made an

excellent Buddhist

so

this heretical Buddhist says uh I don't

I don't even think that terravada

Buddhism or Buddhism in general has uh

a monopoly even on full enlightenment

so I'll just move on to Diane's

next and last question this is the last

question of of the day

and that is in Christianity it seems

like Jesus is idolized as the Supreme

Being in Buddhism is Buddhism like this

with the Buddha

well originally

um I don't think the Buddha or Jesus was

claiming to be the highest being in the

world

but both of them got essentially deified
the Buddha is claimed to be a human in
theravada Buddhism just setting aside
all the Mahayana developments but in
theravada Buddhism

go to My Buddha is declared to be human
but I mean he was like 27 feet tall and
he had you know 40 teeth and and all
these strange physical peculiarities
that would be just impossible in a human
being

and he's I mean he's not God or even a
God but you've got like the the Two
Chief deities of the the early Hindu
Pantheon coming down and worshiping him
you know you've got mahab Brahma and and

Saka who is the same as Indra
they're coming down and you know they're
bowing down to them and
uh Indra at least becomes a good
developed Buddhist and a Buddhist Saint
even even though he was kind of a
warrior God for the early indoorians
so uh it's just human nature that you
idolize the founder of your religion I
think Muhammad
um is like one of the main exceptions to
this and that he was so human you know
he was literally
he was a pirate he was a bandit
you know he had many wives
he you know he killed people sold women

and children to slavery you know raped
and so forth so I mean there was so much
relatively recent information about
Muhammad

and he was living in sort of a Dark Age
kind of a primitive Society anyway that
um

they they just accepted that Muhammad
even though he was just a guy

and uh not even necessarily all that
wise of a guy he was chosen by God by

Allah to uh be be his prophet and uh

there is some of that like in the Old
Testament too it's like who was it

Jeremiah I think was just unwillingly

pretty much coerced into being a prophet

so it was something like that but but

getting back to Christianity and and
Buddhism yeah it's it's kind of the same
phenomenon

um the Buddha wasn't turned into a God
but then again

um in Ancient India gods were small G
gods and weren't really the Supreme
Being anyway

so

yeah so it has happened that most
western Buddhists do not deify or
idolize the Buddha other than maybe just
having the idol you know like the the
statue like like that statue if you can
see it

um you know they'll bow to the Statue

maybe but still they consider the Buddha
to have been a man he was a man who
attained the highest possible state that
a human can attain that you know he he
escaped from samsara he transcended
samsara but um

yeah but then again you go to a
traditional Buddhist country like Thailand
like uh like Burma

and yeah there's a lot of people there
who really I've been asked a number of
times you know was the Buddha God by by
Buddhists

but um

so they'll they'll worship the Buddha
they believe all the stuff about 27 feet
tall and all that but um

I mean how could he get married how can
he have a kid if he's 27 feet tall
so

yeah I mean technically according to the
tradition itself

you know you don't just worship the
Buddha you I mean you just follow what
the Buddha taught as well as you can
and um I mean the boot is almost
irrelevant

you know Dharma is true regardless of
whether the stories about the Buddha's
life are true

you know the four noble truths are still
true regardless of any person named
gotima that lived in ancient India

so

um so the answer to this question is is
the Buddha idolized like Jesus is
idolized as a Supreme Being it's yes and
no

um people that who are just living in a
very traditional almost pre-modern
culture

uh we'll just follow their follow their
tradition follow their culture that has
essentially deified the Buddha or some
people they just

um they're just not ready for like the
the higher more advanced
aspects of Buddhist philosophy and
Buddhist practice you know they're just
um they just want something to worship

you know they just want the ceremonies
and the stories and so forth and so
worshiping the Buddha works for them
and like I was mentioning there are a
few sects of uh like Japanese Buddhism
they they pretty much worship the Lotus
Sutra they've they've idolized and
essentially deified a book
but um that's not peculiar just to those
sex that happens in other religions also
so I guess that's it I think I've
answered all the questions for For
Better or For Worse
and uh if you have any questions you
want to ask feel free to include them in
the comments below if you have access to

the Discord server you can ask them

there if you're signed up on subscribe

star you can ask them there

and um

you know feel free to take a look at the

URL links below including uh the little

advertisements for my books

and uh be happy

so welcome to the appendix to q a number

33 pretty sure it's number 33.

um these are the questions that uh

didn't make it onto the list either

because they were asked in a in an area

that I forgot to look at or

um there were a few people who asked

questions right after I did the Q a just

like a matter of hours last night after

I did the Q a yesterday so I might as well answer those two so we got more questions

and I will attempt to answer those questions and so here we go the first question or the 16th or whatever it is from bpat427

and bpap427 says are you familiar with the bahi tawi forest cave monks of Ethiopia are you familiar with any other African renunciate monastic traditions well I've never heard of the bahi tawi forest cave monks of Ethiopia

um all I know about any kind of African monastic tradition would be like Coptic Christianity and um I don't know very

much about that I do know that it exists
so that's an easy question because I'm
almost totally ignorant on the subject
so I'll just move on to bpat427's next
question

which is do you think sticks hex and
Hammer has a good grasp on dhamma
and I watched ex and Hammer almost every
morning before I go to work or just when
I get up I'm drinking coffee I'll watch
sticks hex and Hammer 666 and I think
he's got a he's really good at seeing
the big picture
so he's he's got a talent for analyzing
the political situations
um that he is exposed to like he you
know he's good at talking about politics

but

um he's not infallible he's not

omniscient bless his heart

and um

when he talks about Buddhism

um the few times I've listened to him

talk about it he does seem to have uh

somewhat of a superficial understanding

of it I don't think he's on he's studied

it very deeply you know he's gone in a

different direction which is fine

um

and also like when he talks about Burma

or Myanmar he he really doesn't know

very much about what he's saying so it's

just as well that he doesn't mention it

very often

so

um I like sticks hacks and Hammer

um I think he's uh really good as a
political commentator but

um and it may be that he understands
sort of occultism and that sort of thing
um much better than most occultists do
for all I know

but um he does seem to have kind of um
I don't know it just it just doesn't
seem to go very deep

I don't know maybe that's just me but uh
I I really don't I do not consider him
to be

um a valuable source of information on
spirituality

but I do consider him to be a valuable
source of information on politics
so I think we'll just leave it there so
the next question the last question by
bpat427 is and I don't fully understand
this question

when will hashtag free Manu be trending
and I assume this is kind of a joke
because the the spiritual right group to
which I belonged and kind of still do
belong

um

it has uh Gone dormant
for the past few months
maybe two or three months and this is
partly because Manu who is more or less

the leader of it

um he's been rethinking what he wants to

do and rethinking and re-rethinking and

um he's not in prison

but he is sort of uh Bound by indecision

it seems

so uh yeah it's it's hard to say exactly

um when the spiritual right will get

going again if it'll even get going

again but Manu is uh he's already free

as far as I know

he's he's not in prison

so we'll just move on to the next

question which is from rakasa

and rakasa says sometimes when the

Buddha provides a definition in the

sutas he just repeats the word or phrase

he's defining for example in his
discourses on the noble truths and
Eightfold Path sorrow is quote the
sorrow Sorrowing state of Sorrow inner
sorrow inner deep sorrow in someone who
has undergone misfortune

unquote

and right livelihood is when a noble
disciple gives up wrong livelihood and
earns that you're living by right
livelihood why do you suppose the Buddha
does this

well just because it says in the book
doesn't mean that the Buddha said that
um it could be that uh some Monkish
philosophers

um were responsible for that finding its way into the suitors

um

also to some degree it's it could be just um bad translations

because uh like with regard to uh the the noble truths and he's uh I mean he's talking about duka which is in sorrow is not a good translation for it

so it could be that rakasa has uh been relying on a not a very good translation

but it is true that this kind of

repetitive stuff is found in the texts

maybe not quite as Extreme as the the

example about sorrow here but there

sometimes the word itself is used to

define uh is used in the definition of

the word like you're defining

um you know sorrow for example then the word sorrow will appear sometimes in the definition which is really bad form it's not really a valid definition

um which is kind of troubling the left nowadays when they can't Define the word woman other than just a person who identifies as a woman

so again it's the word that is to be defined is itself part of the definition which is a No-No

but um so sometimes it does happen to some degree that you've got this kind of thing

um like the word to be defined is

included in the definition and
um to the extent that the Buddha may
have said this sort of thing
um it may be that that's just um
indicative of
a sort of pre-formal logic in Ancient
India in the Buddhist time I've
discussed this to some degree on video
recently
where um like
India in the Buddhist time was in a
almost a pre-logical state they didn't
have their version of Aristotle yet
or Aristotle
um like the knowledge of Aristotle
hadn't made it through the trade routes
to India yet

and so formal logic you know the like
the the laws of thought a equals a you
know a must be either a or not a or um I
I forget the other one but

um

um that

in in the Buddhist time that this kind
of like clear rules of logical thought
hadn't been formulated yet
or at least they hadn't really struck
traction yet

so you can find some relatively bad

logic in terravonna Buddhist texts

um mainly just because that's kind of
the state of logic

the state that logic was in in the

Buddhist time and that was one advantage that Mahayana Buddhism had is that they had much more sophisticated logic by the time Mahayana arose like 500 years after the time of the Buddha that logic had developed and so they had some really profound

um philosophy

that was in some ways Beyond terravada

so

yeah so and the the reason is I I kind of doubt that the Buddha would be that would Define things that way or if he did it's just because of the sort of the rudimentary uh state of formal logic in the Buddhist time it may have been sort of a cultural thing

um

but for the most part I think it's just

uh

stuff that was added by

scholar monks or some such

so it is a good question I mean I've

noticed that I've been frustrated by

that myself

so

here we are

so the next question is from Chaplin

and chaplain says

said says what are conservative values

how do conservative men conduct

themselves and how do conservative

values align with taravada Buddhism

uh that's it's kind of a big question
you know what are conservative values
and conservative values are going to
vary

from place to place because

um I mean the word conservative implies
that you are conserving a tradition
and so the values of your concern of a
conservative are going to depend upon
the tradition that that conservative is
conserving

so in in the west conservative values uh
tend to be Christian values

so

um yeah I don't want to get too deep
into Christian values but um
let's see

what can I think of as conservative

values I mean just just a respect for
tradition

which generally involves a respect for
um just basic morality

and that's going to vary a little bit
from place to place you know more

Buddhist morality is different from

Christian morality to some degree I mean

there are there is a lot of overlap

you know don't don't kill

well don't lie don't steal don't kick

puppies

don't commit adultery that kind of a

thing

um and conservative values would take

that seriously

instead of just kind of ignoring it or
um just giving it lip service that kind
of a thing

and I assume conservative values would
also uh involve

um

sort of Men Behaving like traditional
men women behaving like traditional
women so you could be like tradcon

um

but yeah it's such a huge question I
mean I'd have to give it a lot of
thought and then probably could talk
about it for 20 minutes or more but um
what are conservative values how do
conservative men conduct themselves and

how do conservative values align with
terracotta Buddhism again it it depends
on the tradition that is being conserved
by a conservative

um I do not consider a conservative to
be necessarily

um like hard right

you know I mean just hard right would
have a different set of values and it
may be that that's what chaplain is
trying to get at here in which case

um maybe chaplain should ask the
question again

but with regard to conservatives I mean
it's just being a traditionalist
essentially and so it would depend on

the tradition and how do conservative values align with terrible Buddhism well uh conservative in a terrible Buddhist country would be a devout terravonna Buddhist

um

so I mean in in a place like Burma the conservatives are devout Buddhists because

um that's just the tradition that they are conserving that they are following whereas in the West

um the tradition that is being conserved tends to be something along Christian lines and so that's why you've got the people who are not conservatives are more inclined to follow Buddhism in the

West

so it's sort of a a liberal or even uh

hard leftist

uh

I mean you can't can hardly even call it

a tradition because in the west they're

not traditionalists and so they Embrace

theravada Buddhism sort of but then

they reject most of the tradition

so they call themselves theravada

Buddhist while at the same time

redefining it and reworking it and

turning into something radically

different from what

is being practiced in in a conservative

theravada Buddhist country

so I've kind of answered that one I
guess I'll move on to the next one this
is also from chaplain

how has your transition gone from senior
monk to a layperson in a relationship
over the last year any big changes or
surprises that you had not anticipated
how has the huge change transformed you
personally man this could be another
half hour long video this is this is uh
a complicated one

I'll try to try to strip it down

how has your transition gone from senior
monk to a lay person in a relationship
over the last year well the biggest
change is the relationship definitely I
was a recluse just a loner

for 30 years

essentially

and um really just kind of merging my

life with another person

is uh

I mean that's that's the biggest deal I

mean it's like

I've I've practiced mindfulness enough

that what's going on on the outside is

largely

it's peripheral

so I can be alone in a cave

meditating which I did for many years or

I can be working in a sheet metal shop

but sort of inside I'm still pretty much

the same it's really not that radical of

a change for me

but having a relationship where you're

sharing your life with another person

like intense intimacy

that is really a big change and of

course

um having a relationship with a member

of the opposite gender

you know with a real live woman

um that has that has been interesting

and sometimes challenging just because

female psychology and male psychology

um

they're they're obviously very different

in certain ways unless unless you're

just like the the radical Lefty that

can't even Define woman

but men and women have sexual dimorphism
from biological point of view not only
physically are men and women different
but psychologically men and women are
different also and so

um

like being very close sharing a life
with a person who for example women tend
to be more insecure than men you know
they're more timid or inclined to worry
or anxiety that kind of a thing and um
that has taken I mean it's like uh
kind of a challenge to me something I I
need to deal with
but it's all well worth it I mean my
spiritual practice now is consists in

large part of of this relationship that
I'm in

and just um

loving her as well as I can and being as
good of an influence on her as I can

so let's see any big changes or

surprises that you had not anticipated

um

well I mean my Approach

to like going into the future is not

having too many ideas of what is what

I'm going to be dealing with you know

it's there's not a whole lot of

anticipation at all you know I just just

kind of stay in the present moment and

do the best you can from one moment to

the next and you know the future will

you know give no thought for tomorrow
you know tomorrow you know you can you
can deal with it then
so I mean still you have to
try to be prudent and and maneuver
yourself in a in a good direction but um
yeah that's that's one difference
between uh
between me as a male and uh my
sweetheart as a female is uh she's
trying to
anticipate the future and and plan for
it and worry about it and stew over it
sometimes and uh it just uh is kind of
alien to my way of going about things
so let's see how has the huge change

transformed me personally

um

that's a good question

um I'm still I'm still me

I mean I'm I'm half of an us now that's
a big transformation

um

I'm more natural now I'm not as it's
kind of strange but being a monk is
you're living a kind of an unnatural
lifestyle

and that

it kind of creates a certain

like chronic frustration or a kind of
friction

that uh has now largely dissipated I'm
uh probably healthier now than I was as

a monk in certain ways anyway

um

yeah

but um yeah there hasn't been like a

huge transformation other than just uh

in addition to being me I'm also half of

an us that's like the main

transformation

and uh it's all good

so I'll just move on to the next

question which is from surfan

I think that's how to pronounce his name

and surfan says is it possible to ordain

for a relatively brief period say one to

three years in the terravonna tradition

and yeah I mean you can technically be

ordained from one to three days

in the Terra water Tradition at least in
Burma and Thailand maybe not so much in
Sri Lanka

but yeah it's it's very common for um a
man to uh like during Sinjin like the
New Year's Festival which lasts five or
six days a lot of men will just go to
the monster and be ordained for five or
six days during sinjan

or um they they have a vacation they
ordain during their vacation I've had
old guys bragging to me you know I've
been ordained as amongst 17 times you
know

so yeah that's that's easy one to three
years that's

yeah that's that's easy it happens a lot
in fact I was told in Thailand
um I mean I was told this quite a while
ago I might not still be the same
but I was told in Thailand uh any monk
that's been a monk for five years or
more is is called odd John just because
most monks don't last that long
you know most people who are ordained as
monks do not remain in robes their
entire life the king of Thailand is the
tradition that the king of Thailand is
ordained as a monk for a relatively
short time certainly less than a year in
most cases
so yeah you can do that like uh if you

go to Burma to a meditation center
there's a good chance if you're gonna if
you're going to be there for like a
month or something you could probably be
ordained as a monk and I do not like the
idea I might as well I mean when I was a
senior monk when I was an Abbot I just
refused to do temporary ordinations and
I'm not talking about one to three years
I'm talking about you know one week or
two weeks or one or one or two months
because

um usually the person who was being
ordained just doesn't know anything he
doesn't know the rules of monastic
discipline he's probably still got money
um so it was just a it's just a bad idea

and from my point of view I just didn't want to deal with it although it is easy it's it's like the tradition in uh Burma and I'm pretty sure in Thailand also that you can just go to certain monasteries and be ordained um you don't even have to be a terrible Buddhist which is also just kind of crazy

I've uh I saw a Catholic priest who was ordained as a monk

um without I mean he was he wasn't even a Buddhist he was he was a Christian and uh I've I've met one Mahayana monk I mentioned him in a previous video that he was a Korean Mahayana monk with the

gray pajama things wearing wearing those
and uh

he went to pandita Rama and uh was doing
intensive practice there in in the

pandito Rama and Rangoon and

um he didn't like being treated like a

lay person because he had to go behind

the ordained terravada Buddhist monks

and so he was ordained without even

disrobing from being a Mahayana Monk and

as soon as he left pandina Rama he

probably just took off the the orangey

Brown ropes and put on the great pajamas

again and uh didn't have to go through

any kind of reordination ceremony or any

such thing

so so the short answer to surf on is yes

and I'll just move on to the next
question and this is the very last
question for real this time this is
really the last question

this is from mon

I think is how you pronounce this
this

here's one Bonte what kind of job can
you get so you can practice the path
with the least distractions possible I
mean I know you might answer becoming
monk but I'm just not ready to do so to
be honest with you I used to work in a
pretty busy noisy stressful type of
environment and it clearly makes things
very hard if you can point some fields

or type of occupation that leaves a bit
of space for mind

and the other question is about
meditation

oh okay so this this is two questions

here I'm gonna separate them

okay

so I'll answer this this wasn't for real

the last question after all sorry about

that there's he has two questions here

okay so the question here is uh what

kind of dharmic occupation can you have

that won't just completely distract you

and you know lure you into some sorrow

or just just harass you into samsara

and um

well I mean there there's like two ways

you can go about it you can you can get
a job that is helping people you know
that you're earning Merit by you know
what you're doing you know you're
working like uh

uh like in a hospital or something you
know where you're actually helping
people that would be a darned job but
it would be like the meritorious kind of
job that could be very

um hectic you know like if you if you're
like an ambulance driver you're going to
be helping a lot of people saving lives
but you're gonna be exposed to all kinds
of craziness and just really awful stuff
like nightmarish stuff sometimes

so that's like one intense route of a
dharma occupation is

um like a hospice nurse or something
like that where you're helping people
but

um at the same time it can be very

um

you know it just fills your mind with

what's going on and so it can be very

some sorry call at the same time it's

it's meritorious where you're actually

um you know helping other people maybe

even saving lives but the other approach

which is the approach I've taken

um just just through karmic coincidence

I guess is I'm working in a sheet metal

shop and it's uh laid back you know if

if you're working as a kind of manual laborer

then you know you're not bringing your work home with you I mean I still have dreams about driving forklifts and that kind of a thing but I mean you can just kind of leave your work at at work and then just come home and relax and do whatever you want to do and so like a job that's just manual labor it's it's good for you like maybe I don't know about construction but just running machines you know running a forklift maybe even being a truck driver that would be like a simple and potentially meditative kind of job where you're just

sitting there doing your thing so
um being a truck driver also I mean
you're just kind of a Wanderer
so maybe something like that but it
would be just a simple more or less blue
collar

um manual kind of a job that um
preferably you're not interacting with
you know other people that are just
talking all the time

um that may be a challenge for me in the
future

um

I I still haven't got the sales rep job
that I was offered but it looks like
it's going to be happening soon and uh
just sitting up front next to two women

that are discussing you know small children's preferences in breakfast cereals and so forth that could really be a trial for me but working in the back you just you know sound of machines you know you want to talk you can talk but for the most part you can just mind your own business and do your job and that's um I I actually like that so that's that's what I would suggest I mean those are your two choices if you want a dharmic occupation either the positive dharmic occupation of helping people which as I say can be very stressful or there's like the passive dharmic job

which would be more monk-like I think
where I mean you're just doing a simple
job possibly a repetitive one possibly
driving a truck or some such and um
you can you can get meditation in there
like like working in a sheet metal shop
there are plenty of opportunities for
mindfulness meditation when you're doing
like repetitive actions you know running
something through a machine or something
like that

so that's what I've done

and so

um I'll just move on to for real

genuinely the last question this is also

from mon ComEd

and it's this question is and the other

question is about meditation how can you
make the meditation time a habit I find
it very hard to keep going with daily
meditation

well I mean you just gotta discipline
yourself you set up a time

um probably the easiest right after you
get up in the morning or right before
you go to bed

and um

you know instead of reading a book

before you go to bed or instead of

watching sticks hex and Hammer videos

when you first get up you just sit down

and meditate and then you just do it

whether you want to or not you know you

have to force yourself you have to be
firm with yourself you have to tame
yourself if that's what you really want
to do

if you want to make meditation a habit
then you just have to keep doing it over
and over again even if you don't feel
like doing it

and it's it's relatively simple and
straightforward you just have to
um discipline yourself and just do it

having I mean having a group
can help although

um having a group where you sit with
them every day might be kind of hard to
manage

but

really I mean it's like just about
anything else I mean you want to lose
weight or stop smoking or whatever it is
I mean you just have to discipline
yourself I mean you just have to do it
whether you want to or not you might be
climbing the walls but still you have to
have enough self-discipline that you
endure the difficulty you endure the
discomfort or whatever and just go ahead
and you just keep doing it just do it
as the uh commercial used to say maybe
it still does I don't know I don't like
commercials
so anyway that's it I've asked I've
answered the questions

um again

and this time when I say be happy I I
really mean it you should you should be
happy

Hello and welcome to episode 34 of
question and answer.

We are slowly and gradually working our
way up to six gorrillion.

And uh my chair is squeaking. Maybe I
should start over, but nah.

Uh

so I guess uh

the big news for me today is a

creature resembling a heron or possibly
a pterodactyl

came and invaded our yard and

I think possibly ate all of the our fish
in the pond

including possibly even my loaches.

So uh please uh

send your thoughts and prayers for my
loaches.

And uh also

for the few of you that have my phone
number, very few of you,
I hope.

Um my phone died due to uh
everything all conditioned things being
uh impermanent, inconstant, and all.

And uh although I got a new phone,
um I've lost all my contacts. So if you
want to be uh on my contact list again,
assuming that you were on it before,
just uh shoot me a text and uh
that'll take care of it.

So we got the usual large number of good
questions.

And uh

I don't know. I don't think we got any bad questions at all.

Tell you the truth.

So I'll just uh wade into this list of questions. And the first question, the first several questions in fact, are from Mary, spelled m e r r y.

And Mary's first question here is another question regarding robes. You said monks are not allowed to wear lay people's clothing, but in the time of the Buddha everybody wore robes and monks wore robes. So I don't fully understand.

Well, it is true that in the Buddha's

time lay people did wear robes

resembling

um what monks' robes were like.

Um it's just like a rectangle of cloth

wrapped around your body in a certain

way, kind of toga-like, I think. But the

thing is

the lay people wore white robes.

And monks wore robes that were

discolored, usually dyed a kind of uh

golden-brown color.

And also monks were required to cut the

cloth up and sew it back together.

Unless it was just made out of rags that

were sewn together. But even if they got

like new cloth or they just uh picked up

a shroud at a at a cemetery, it was one

big piece of cloth, which still happens sometimes.

Um like in in Asia, I mean.

Then uh they'd have to cut it up and sew it back together to make the cloth uh less valuable because apparently there were cloth thieves in uh northern India in the in the north in the Ganges Valley in uh in the Buddha's time.

In fact, there are quite a few rules designed to uh

um prevent your robes from being stolen.

In fact, there's a strange rule for bhikkhunis or uh ordained Buddhist nuns that um

they weren't allowed to bathe naked

unless there were lots of thieves nearby, in which case um they could bathe naked just so that they wouldn't get their robes stolen.

Which is kind of a strange rule.

So yeah, the difference between the robes that lay people wore and the robes that monks wore in the Buddha's time were that monks' robes were dyed kind of a dingy brownish color.

And also they were cut up into pieces and sewn back together again. Other than that, it is true that the uh the lay people wore robes sort of similar to what Theravada Buddhist monks wear today.

So I'll just move on to Mary's next

question.

Also, were there early Buddhist schools that maybe if existing today would be better for us all? I mean those of us who don't really care about Abhidhamma but solely the suttas.

Um

almost all of the ancient Indian schools pre- pre-Mahayana had some some kind of Abhidhamma or Abhidharma.

Except there was one called the Sautrantika school, which means suttas only or sutras only. And they just made a special point of not having any Abhidhamma or Abhidharma.

And um just basing their philosophy on
the on the suttas themselves. And
according to

A.K. Warder in his history of Indian
Buddhism, he was saying that the
Sautrantika school was one of the more
conservative schools. Although he also
says Theravada

um was one of the the most conservative
of all the schools.

So

maybe Sautrantika might be more suitable
for Westerners who don't take Abhidhamma
seriously, but it's really not that
difficult

to just disregard Abhidhamma as much as
you can. It's fairly easy in the West.

In Burma, it's a little more difficult because in Burma Abhidhamma is considered to be the most profound and most important of the teachings of the Buddha, even though most Westerners um do not believe that the Buddha actually taught it.

So yeah, there was the Sautrantika school, which didn't have an Abhidhamma.

Um

but we are fairly lucky. I think we're very very lucky that of the ancient schools

the ancient Indian pre- pre-Mahayana schools that survived

well,

we got Theravada,

which really was one of the most

conservative

um who made the the most effort to stay

faithful to what

the historical Buddha originally taught.

Um at the second council shortly after

the second council, there was the first

major schism.

And you had the Theras on one side, the

Sthaviras, which is Sanskrit for Theras.

And you had the the Mahasangha on the

other side. And the Mahasangha, they put

more emphasis on personal inspiration

and sort of keeping the text alive, you

know, the the suttas are a living

document, so to speak.

And although they did maintain maybe a higher level of inspiration just because they weren't as dogmatic and adhering to words and books, nevertheless, they just took the ball and ran with it, and then you wind up with all sorts of of strange teachings. And it was the Mahasangha school also that gradually developed into Mahayana. At least uh that's what I have read.

So

let's see.

So I guess I guess I answered that question. So I'll just move on to Mary's next question.

And this is with reference to something

I said in a previous video. I said that
um

when I was a monk, I did not experience
thirst. That um

well, I'll just I'll just give you the
question here. So it's how is it that
you were never thirsty as a white guy in
Myanmar, you probably sweat a lot a lot
more than all talk thongs,
which is aboriginal peoples, I think.
Native peoples. And you have never felt
thirst.

Okay. Well, when I was a kid, I felt
thirsty, but then some that some point,
I think while I was a monk, I just
stopped feeling thirst. And so
um

I would just drink as a habit. You know, I just make sure to stay hydrated. I read a survival guide a long time ago. It was like an army an like an outdated um US Army survival guide saying that uh you should always drink enough that your pee stays relatively colorless. You know, you don't want like dark orange pee.

And so uh I just go by that or if I just start feeling dizzy, sometimes when my mouth would start going dry, I'd know that I was getting dehydrated, and then I would just drink.

But I did not feel the the sensation of thirst.

Um and I I don't remember exactly when it stopped. It was just finally I just realized, wow, I just do not feel thirsty ever anymore.

Um

and then after I became a layperson again,

as you can see,

I'm not wearing robes,

I started feeling thirsty again, which is uh

kind of strange. I I really I really can't explain it.

Uh hopefully it's not a symbolic thing because um

according to the Four Noble Truths, the cause of all suffering is tanha,

usually translated as craving, but
literally it means thirst.

But uh
yeah.

So yeah, I just I just did not feel
thirst for years and years.

It was just I would have other
indications that I was that I needed to
drink something, like uh orange pee or
just being like dizzy and light-headed
and my mouth going dry, that kind of
thing.

So I'll just move on to the next
question, also by Mary.

What was the the when you were the most
frightened in your whole life. I'm just

curious because you do not seem as a person that is being scared very easily.

Well, that's

that's kind of a tough one.

I mean

once when I was a kid, maybe 7 years old, the neighbor kids who were older than me

uh held me over the side of a bridge.

You know, like head down.

And um yeah, that's being kind of head down on a roof or something like working on a roof and you got to be head down like you're cleaning gutters or something. Yeah, that's that's one thing that there's just this visceral like

instinctive

um

fear, I guess would be the word.

But if you're referring to my adult life

um

yeah, I've had like one panic attack in
my life.

And um

that was

I'd been a monk for

20 years, maybe.

And I was visiting the USA to to see my
parents. And an old friend of mine
wanted to go camping with me.

And this old friend of mine, he smokes
like a Rastafarian. I mean, he he's just

smoking out all the time.

And I used to I used to smoke a lot of weed before I was a monk.

And so I I got high with him. And he just got me. I mean, I could not keep up with him. I mean, I was just absolute total lightweight at the time. He was a heavyweight. He was I mean, he smoked like Bob Marley or something.

And um

I remember he had like some kind of Mexican devil mask up on his wall. And that was starting to to kind of weird me out. I asked him if he'd take it down, which he did.

And um

I was really really high.

And um

uh we went to bed or he went to bed. And I'm hearing these strange like footstep noises. And I'm looking out and it looking out into the living room. I was in like in the guest bedroom. And there's nothing there. It's all silent and everything. And I'm hearing these footsteps again. And I just started getting like paranoid or or something. I just started having like a panic attack. So I started yelling for my friend who uh comes out like very confused in his underwear. You know, he just been woken up. And uh I just it was like I asked if I could give him a hug just cuz

that would sort of like

just the physical contact would assure me that everything was okay.

So, he he kind of grinned and gave me a hug and went back to bed and everything everything was okay after that. But uh it started a kind of tradition. We we give each other a hug like when we meet after that.

Uh

so, yeah, I guess it was like a a

drug-induced

panic attack

would be it. But being scared as a

general rule, I mean, from the Buddhist

point of view, it's it's it's like bad

karma. I mean, if you are frightened

if if like if fear just starts to arise
please excuse the squeaky chair. But if
if fear arises, I mean, that's just past
karma from the Buddhist point of view.

You know, so the first first arising of
it

is is not you're not making any new bad
karma. That's sort of like unskillful
karma from the past. You know, it's just
the momentum of it is causing it to
arise again.

But if you like take it seriously and
dwell on it then then you're making new
bad karma.

So, I've I really
took that to heart. You know, once you

once you read the text and you believe that, you know, it's I mean, it doesn't help anything. Being afraid really doesn't help anything. It evolved in our pre-human ancestors um just as a way of saving your life. If you're too stupid to analyze the situation you know, it's just uh if you're scared, run.

And um you know, it apparently had some survival value in the past, but we've gotten to the level

uh at least some of us have where you're intelligent enough that you can do what do what is appropriate without being scared. In fact, being scared can just really interfere with your judgment.

So

yeah, I mean, I have been in relatively
scary situations like um

I went through a few years well, several
years in Burma where I would

every year I'd hike through Alaundaw

Kathapa National Park

right through the middle of the park.

And there were tigers there. I wasn't so
much afraid of tigers as wild boars

though because uh

I've been told that you're more likely
to be attacked by wild pigs

than tigers because there aren't very
many tigers. You're much more likely to
come across wild boars.

And um

so I would I would just
camp just sleep under a tree. I didn't
have a sleeping bag or anything. I'd
just lie on the ground under a tree. I'd
have like a little plastic thing that I
could you know, just keep me off the
dirt. But I'd always sleep under a
easily climbable tree.

And uh if if fear would start to arise,
you know, you hear a twig snap out in
the darkness. You
just this immediate, you know, what's
that kind of a feeling. I mean, you just
watch it. There there are suttas in the
texts where
if fear arises, you master the fear

before you do anything else. You know,
if you're doing walking meditation and
fear arises, you just keep doing the
walking meditation until the fear passes
and then you can change posture or if if
you're sitting or whatever
you just
do not change your position until or
your posture until you have mastered the
fear. And I mean, it's it's relatively
straightforward just mindfulness
meditation. You just observe the fear
and then it's not you anymore. I've
talked about this before. Like anything
you can observe isn't you because if you
are anything at all, you're the one

doing the observing and not the thing being observed. So, if you can observe your mental states, you know your mental states are not you.

So, if fear arises, you observe the fear. You've already created a separation between you and assuming that you really exist and the fear assuming that the fear really exists. So, it's it's not I'm scared anymore. It's fear is arising.

But um

that one that one panic attack I had, it was you know, when it when it's just like this visceral thing that just kind of takes over, then yeah,

practicing mindfulness uh

it you might not even occur to you at the time.

So, that's a long question to a short answer. So, I'll just move on to the next question.

I know I'm crossing the line here, but for a something something year-old man, I am just wondering what is your spouse's age?

So, my sweetheart is 12 years younger than me.

Which um

uh coincidentally is also the the age differential between my parents. My father was 12 years older than my

mother.

So, yeah, I it's not that I'm vain about

my own age. I just uh

don't want to be like divulging my

sweetheart's age because it's just it's

not gallant

shall we say.

Uh

so, let's just move on to

Mary's last question.

How many dutanga practices did you

practice and what were they?

Well, as a monk, the monk isn't supposed

to to say what his dutanga practices

are.

Um but I suppose I should say what

dutanga practices are just for those of

you who don't know what dutanga practices are.

Um there are 13 optional practices ascetic practices that a monk is allowed to to do in Theravada Buddhism. They're called dutangas.

And I mean, they're completely optional.

And if you do them, the only person you're supposed to tell is your own teacher.

You can take dutanga practices from your teacher. And then only you and he will know. In fact, in the Visuddhimagga, which is

the main commentarial text in Theravada Buddhism, there's a story about

these two monks

who just happened to be sharing a cabin
one night.

And one of them was doing the sitters
practice, which is a dutanga where you
never lie down. You sleep in a sitting
position.

And

there was a a thunderstorm that night.

And uh there was a flash of lightning
and the whole cabin lit up inside. And
the other monk could see that the the
first monk wasn't lying down. He was
sitting there on his bed. And so he
asked him, "Do you do the the sitting
practice?" And so in order not to be
telling anybody about his dutangas, he

just lay down and said, "No." And then the very next night he started doing it again. And he'd been doing it for years and years.

So

I was

kind of like that. I mean um I suppose I should list off some of the main dutangas. And if you really want to know about dutangas, I'm pretty sure it's in chapter two of the Visuddhimagga.

Um

so, one of them is as I just said, you just do not lie down. You sleep in a sitting position.

One is living in cemeteries. One is

living under the open sky. One is living in a forest.

Uh one is only eating alms food. You don't accept invitations to people's houses, anything like that. You just take your bowl and walk through the village every day.

Um let's see, another one is wearing only three robes, which is kind of a fishy one. It's

because according to the rules of monastic discipline, you're really only allowed to wear three robes anyway. If you have an extra robe, you can only keep it for 10 days.

Um wearing only rag robes, like robes made out of rags that you pick up off

the ground.

Um let's see. Eating only once a day,
eating only one meal a day.

Um

let's see.

There's one There's kind of an obscure
one where you don't wait if people ask
you to wait when you're walking for
alms, like, you know, wait a minute, I
want to go back to my house and and get
something. Or and you're not supposed to
wait. There's another one where you just
go systematically house by house. You
don't skip over the the houses that you
know give bad food, that kind of a
thing.

Uh let's see. I don't know how many I've
I've listed off, but there are 13
altogether.

And um

I really didn't try to make a big deal
out of dutonga practices. I mean, I
lived in forests a lot.

Um I lived in cemeteries briefly from
time to time.

Um

I ate one meal,
just one meal a day,
pretty much for 30 years with very few
exceptions.

Um I always kept only three robes,
although I did allow myself to keep an
extra robe for 10 days.

Like um you know, you you got an old robe and you're you make a new one. So then you got the new one and the old one. You got 10 days to get rid of the old one.

So I did that.

Um let's see. I did the sitting practice for over a year, which was difficult.

Um yeah, it's it's really hard to get used to sleeping in a sitting position.

And uh there were a few times where um you know, you'd you'd fall asleep sitting, but then you'd wake up kind of like on your side on the floor.

Um

so let's see. Rag robes, it was just too

difficult because um
especially in Southeast Asia or or in
Burma, which is a poor country anyway,
by the time people throw their cloth
away, it's it's pretty much you know,
just shredded rags.

Um I I suppose I should add that each
dutonga, according to the Visuddhimagga,
has three levels. It's got like easy,
medium, and hard.

And for example, the sitting practice,
the easy way is sleep sitting in a chair
is like sitting in a chair when you
sleep.

And the medium is the medium level is
you're able to lean back against a
board, or else you can also use a kind

of belt thing around like your your
knees and your back to just hold you up
in a sitting position. And then finally,
the hard practice is you're just
sitting, not leaning back against
anything. You're just sitting there like
you're meditating, uh sleeping.

And I was ordained in the Tong Pullo
tradition where all the monks did this
practice. It was just like a thing that
the Tong Pullo monks did. They didn't
lie down.

But when I got to Burma,
um I was a monk for more than a year in
in a Burmese place in California before
I went to Burma. But when I got to

Burma, it was just so hot that I wanted to be as cool as possible. Leaning back against anything, it would just get foul with sweat.

So I quickly learned that the coolest way to sleep is like spread eagle on a concrete floor. So I started sleeping just on a on a concrete floor.

Um sometimes using a piece of wood for a pillow, not because I wanted to be ascetic. It was just literally that was the comfortable way of sleeping. And the piece of wood for a pillow just didn't soak up sweat like a cloth pillow would. But uh I did try to downplay any kind of dutongas. Like I

did I ate one meal a day, but what I would do sometimes, just to break the dutonga, is I'd be sitting there eating, then I would just get up, take a step to the left, take a step to the right again, sit back down, and finish my meal. So that I wasn't doing it all in one sitting.

Cuz that's that's the way it's worded.

The dutonga practice is is the one sitter's practice.

So

yeah, it's it's so I mean, really I can't say how many dutonga practices I did because it was sort of incidental.

Like living in a forest, I just like

living in forests. And um

this the three robes, that's that's just following the rules of monastic discipline literally anyway.

And one meal a day, I I don't know.

So

yeah, I can't really say how many I practiced. Proba- maybe three or four were pretty much full-time, and then there was a few few extra ones like um like sleeping in a cemetery, where if I was traveling, like there was a a town called Kani

that um

whenever I would stay there, I would I'd always stay in the cemetery there, which had a really nice pavilion.

So and you could just go around and see human bones and and things lying on the ground.

So it was nice.

So I'll just move on to the next question, which is from Weird Flex or Wyrd Flex, w y r d flex.

And uh Weird Flex says,

"Do you suppose that meditative states are more conducive to super sensible encounters, for example, ghosts, spirits, devas, etc.?"

Meditative states.

Well,

according to orthodox Theravada,

if you get into jhana states, then you

would be

getting into a

a realm of subtlety that that is

like the abode of Brahmas. Like um

according to orthodox Theravada,

you have to have attained jhana in order

to get into the Brahma realms after you

die. You know, it's a very high heaven

realms.

So

um it would probably increase the

subtlety of your mind, like the the

subtlety of your vibe, so that you could

you'd be more likely to see

um you know, more subtle beings.

Um with regard to ghosts,

maybe.

Maybe. I'm not sure. But it it would depend on what kind of meditative state you were cultivating.

So I mean, some really advanced, like gurus, swamis, meditation masters, they apparently can see

um beings that that we can't see. Or also, they can just see a person just they can just see right through you.

Like Neem Karoli Baba, who was a Hindu in in India. I mean, when he would look at you, he would see he would know you better than you know you. He would he would just see, you know, where you were

at karmically, you know, he'd he'd see
your past lives, supposedly. Just
you know, he'd see it all.

And I think the the heron or pterodactyl
just tried to land again. We got the
dogs out in front.

But um getting back to the question, I
get I get uh distracted by things
happening in the window.

Uh let's see.

So see, do you suppose that meditative
states are more conducive to super
sensible encounters?

Um with regard to some of them, yeah,
and it would depend on what kind of
meditation you were doing.

I mean, if you're just like uh counting

your breaths or or some kind of elementary meditation like that, just reciting the the qualities of the Buddha or something, it might not make much difference.

But if you're getting to subtle, you know, subtle detached mental states, it may detach you from the limitations of ordinary human with regard to what you're able to see.

And of course, materialistic skeptics would just say, "Oh, you're just you know, you're meditating so much that you're starting to hallucinate or whatever." But And that that can happen, too. But um

for the most part, they don't know what they're talking about.

So I'll just move on to the uh Weird Flex's next question.

"Are you at all familiar with the phenomenon of sleep paralysis? Do you think it's simply a biochemical thing, or could the hallucinatory descriptions given by victims, for example, the shadow people, be related to the lower realms?" Well, it's it's like a

I don't know, neurophysiological thing, where

um when we dream, we are paralyzed.

Because if you're if you're having a dream and you're not paralyzed, you'll

act out the dream. You'll start sleepwalking or whatever. You know, you'll be thrashing around and talking out loud and all this.

So I mean, it is just built into us that there is a certain amount of paralysis when we are dreaming.

Um let's see. "Or could the hallucinatory descriptions given by victims, for example, the shadow people, be related to the lower realms?" Um it is common that some people will have um

sort of they'll wake up with like some kind of I don't know if this is a shadow person or not. It's a

very common kind of nightmare where you wake up on your back and you've got some kind of like a dark entity like pressing down on your chest and you can't move.

Um

I don't know, my father experienced that. I think that's probably where the um

the the like the legends or the the mythology of the succubus and the incubus like in ancient ancient Rome where that came from.

I read some ghost stories along those lines that they interpreted it as some kind of possessing spirit like somebody who died in the house and considered it their house or something. That's

possible although it does seem to be fairly common in in just it fits the kind of a stereotype description of what's going on. So it could just be a kind of archetype archetypal kind of nightmare. And then when you wake up you're you're paralyzed because of the the the dream paralysis.

I I had a

uh

what I consider to be a case of dream paralysis. Um

I've I've talked about it before. It was the the legendary time when I was attacked by ogres.

Like I was I was living just out under a

out under a tree out in the woods in
Burma.

And that forest was just infested with
supernatural beings.

My one of my best friends at the time
was a

he was a monk who had been a a high
school math teacher before he became a
monk and he had a degree in physics. He
I mean he was intelligent person but he
was telling me in all seriousness, you
know, there's there's there's naga
dragons there. There's

there's an assault which is a kind of
guardian spirit

with taboos that you had to follow. You
weren't allowed to pee on the ground on

the hill that the the assault was and that sort of thing.

And also he told me that there were um it was well known that there was like an army of of yakas or ogres that had magic guns that could make you go insane if they shot you with them. And there was the famous case of this Hindu swami who was meditating in the same place I was for a while who uh he he made the mistake of trying to make like a an enchanted circle to protect himself but apparently these ogres were territorial and it just pissed them off. And so they they drove him insane. He just went into like a weird fugue state

and was just wandering around not knowing who he was that kind of a thing till he came out onto a highway and uh somebody out of the kindness of their heart nursed him back to some semblance of normality. I think he went back to India.

But anyway, I was uh I just woke up one morning.

I won't give you the the full details.

You can find those elsewhere I think.

But I didn't have a clock even. I just

would leave to go for alms in the

village at dawn. So I was looking up

like kind of propped up on one one elbow

like this

to see if it was dawn yet just trying to

look in over the horizon

and I started hearing like strange

sounds just like somebody playing a bass

guitar over a really loud loud speaker

system down the valley aways and I was

wondering gee, I wonder what that is.

And then I started hearing lots and lots

of voices in my head sort of like if

you're familiar with um

Welcome to the Machine by Pink Floyd off

the album Wish You Were Here. Towards

the end there's all these voices talking

simultaneously. It's just like a chatter

of talking voices. It was like that and

I knew that was in my head and then I

realized I was just stuck. I was frozen.

I was just like

propped up on one arm like this

just paralyzed.

And uh I was thinking well, should I be
afraid? And I quickly ruled that out cuz
that wasn't going to help anything.

So I just thought well, maybe if
something is doing this to me and
they're Buddhist they'll uh
they'll uh be reluctant to keep doing it
if I start reciting

you know, namo tassa bhagavato arahato
sammāsambuddhassa

and uh sure enough it it all just poofed
after I recited that like twice
maybe three times. Three is the magic
number.

And um then I was able to move and
everything and

um I made the mistake of
telling a monk down at the the nearby
monastery about it.

And he had a degree in English. I mean
he was he wasn't stupid. He was he had a
university degree but but also at the
same time his whole body was just
covered with these magical tattoos to
protect him from witchcraft and the evil
eye and and ghosts and snake bite and
stuff. And his eyes got really big and
he just said, "Don't be afraid. They're
just testing you."

But um personally, I just I just think

it was like a waking dream. That's why I had the dream paralysis. It's just I couldn't move. So I I I would I'd chalk that up to a waking dream. But who knows? Maybe it was magic ogres with guns. I don't know.

So we'll just move on to uh Weird Flex's last question.

Oh well, frankly to that I mean it's possible in some cases but I think most sleep paralysis is just like a natural thing to keep you from acting out your dreams. So I move on to Weird Flex's last question. What are your thoughts on Mara?

What motivation could he have for suppressing the Dharma? Is it totally

malefic or something

born out of ignorance and wrong view?

Well, anything malefic would also would almost necessarily from point of view of Buddhism be born out of ignorance and wrong view.

I mean

he's not all wise with right view or he'd be like a saint.

So

um as is often the case I'd have to give you two different answers. One is the orthodox official answer from the point of view of Theravada Buddhism and then I'd have to answer just my own personal opinion because I'm

I don't necessarily follow along with strict orthodoxy all the time.

So

yeah, Mara

he's like the Buddhist devil.

Um he's got three three sexy daughters who tried to tempt the Buddha before he was like on the night that he became the Buddha on the night of his enlightenment but it didn't work.

Um

and the motivation that he has for suppressing the Dharma is he doesn't want anyone escaping samsara because he's like the lord of samsara. Unlike the Christian devil, he lives in the highest heaven realm of the the sensual

realm, the highest deva realm. He lives in the the the deva loka or the deva world of the deities who delight in the creations of others.

And he's got uh kind of his own territory up there and he stays in some celestial palace with his three sexy daughters.

And uh he doesn't want anyone becoming enlightened because then they they're like escaping his power. And he's got some kind of a a power thing.

He's a control freak or something.

But there is uh

um

it's a famous image somewhere in the

texts of

um Mara holding Maha Brahma in the palm
of his hand just indicating that, you
know, Mara is the lord of
of what the the Christians will call
creation. You know, like in Christianity
also, you know, Satan is considered to
be somewhat the lord of this world.

And Mara's I mean that that's one
similarity between the Buddhist devil
and the Christian one.

But um

yeah, his his motivation is just to uh
keep keep as many beings under his rule
as possible.

So

um you know, there are some cases where

before the Buddha became enlightened
there's a sutra in the Sutta Nipata.

I think it's the Padhana sutta.

Where Mara's trying to be friendly and nice. It's like, "Why are you doing this to yourself? Why don't you just live an easy life as a lay person and do sacrifices and acts of generosity and earn merit and you can go to heaven in your next life."

Because um if Mara can't get you to be bad, he'll get you to be good because if you go to heaven you're still in samsara. Heaven's just a higher level of samsara than this world just as hell is a lower realm of samsara.

So that's one difference between the the
Buddhist Mara and the Christian Satan is
uh

Mara's really not necessarily evil. He's
just samsaric.

You know, good and bad are both
samsaric.

And so if he can't get you to be bad,
he'll get you to be good.

So it's not totally malefic. It's just
samsaric.

I think uh

I had this idea that if if there really
is a Satan, he'd be an atheist and I
think Mara's kind of in a way kind of
that way too. Just very I mean there are
people in this world that are just hyper

samsaric. You know, it's just this is all there is. They take everything really seriously. You know, they take money seriously and social status seriously and and the car seriously and you know, they're that's just you know, what their existence is based on.

And I would assume that Mara is that way too.

But uh my own personal experience, I don't think there's even any need for any cosmic bad guy because

um

you know, we can mess ourselves up well enough.

And uh Mara really can't do anything to

us that is not in accordance with our
comma or our karma
for for it to happen anyway.

So I mean he doesn't really have any
power to do anything to us that we're
not literally doing to ourselves because
it's our own karma.

So, I mean, I've I've really never taken
it very seriously. I think Mara would be
kind of mythological being.

But, I mean, there are there are like
malefic beings out there.

So, I'm not saying that there aren't any
um like supernatural
um malefic um entities or beings.

But, um there there'd be just one in
charge,

you know, at the top, so to speak, sort of like Satan in in Christianity or uh Shaitan in in Islam.

Um I don't I don't really think it's necessary. I don't think there's like an organizational structure to it.

According to to Buddhism, and I think maybe Hinduism also with their equivalent, that um Mara is is really not so much a a person or a being as a position. Because

um beings in heaven, including small g gods, including brahmas, don't live forever. They might live a zillion gazillion years, but they don't live forever. So, after one Mara has

exhausted his karma and passes away into some other existence, he'll just get replaced by the next Mara. The same same is true of of Maha Brahman, Sakka, king of gods, and so forth.

Although uh

I might have deviated or digressed from the from the answer here.

So, I'll just move on to the next question.

This is from Rakasa.

Okay, and he thanked me for an answer I gave him about he was asking me about um why the Buddha would give such bad definitions for terms.

And he says, "To clarify, the definition of sorrow was from the Maha Satipatthana

Sutta translated by Bhikkhu Sujato.

For dukkha sacca, Buddha first gave a list of items that constituted dukkha, rendered as suffering, and then defined each item.

And what is rebirth, and what is sorrow, etc.

What struck me was that all the other items had fine definitions, but not sorrow."

So, then he says
for the next Q&A.

So, I it's probably pointless for me to even list to read that part. Um do you feel studying the more refined logic of Mahayana is worthwhile?

Um

the more refined logic of Mahayana.

Reading Mahayana texts is worthwhile.

Even like a strict Theravadan. I have met some really strict Theravadans who

did not want to read anything that

wasn't strict Theravada. You know, they

didn't want to be reading wrong view.

So, they wouldn't I mean, not only would

they not read like fiction, you know,

novels,

they they wouldn't read, you know,

Hinduism or Mahayana or anything like

that. And in a way that's it just

strikes me as being dogmatic. I mean,

you can derive wisdom from reading

Mahayana texts.

Um the more refined logic

um

Yeah, I I have mentioned more than once recently that Mahayana Buddhism, since it because it or partly because it arose centuries after the earlier schools, um it has a more refined kind of logic.

Because apparently, in the Buddha's time, there was no Indian equivalent of Aristotle

um like developing like good rules of formal logic. And so, in the Theravada texts, there the the logic is kind of sketchy.

You know, sometimes it's it's not very good logic from uh like a modern Western

point of view or even a classical Greek
point of view.

Um

So, by the time Mahayana arose, you
know, a few centuries later,
uh apparently, either they did have um
some kind of formal logic developed in
India, or else
maybe just even came from trade routes
from from Greece or Rome.

So,

um

Yeah, some Mahayana just like tramples
on logic, too.

But, it it's all part of a it's all part
of a logical, you know, there's method
to the madness.

Um one of the one of the most important Mahayana books I ever read was called Buddhist Logic. It was it's really old, translated by uh uh a Russian fellow named Sherbatsky. This was even before the the Russian Revolution, the first one. So, he was in St. Petersburg in in Russia like 1915 or something.

But, um it's um there was a a school called the Yogacara logicians.

Uh also, I think it's called the Dignaga school.

Where I mean, they were just developing Buddhist logic.

And it's it's well worth looking into.

It's it's some of it is is profound like

um it was Dignaga or one of his

disciples

who came up with the idea, which I agree

with, that that's um if you have a

sensory datum and no interpretation of

it,

you know, you've got the the vedana, but

not the sanna. You know, you've got the

the sensory datum, but no perceptual

interpretation of of attributing meaning

to it, it's the same as if there's

nothing there at all.

So, that's that's kind of nice. Um one

real breakthrough I had that inspired me

to write my very first Buddhist essay

was from it came from reading volume two
of Buddhist Logic,
where they're talking about
um

what was it? Feeling and perception. I
think that's I think that was it. How
feeling and perception are always
supposed to be
um they arise together. And I'm thinking
like

it's like what comes first? It's like,
do you direct your attention to
something which causes you to perceive
it? But, I mean, if you're not
perceiving anything
yet, I mean, why would you direct your

attention to it? You know, why do you direct your attention to something before you perceived it? But, if you've already perceived it, then you've already seems to have directed your attention to it.

And um

there was there was some statement in there that it was like

um

the directing your attention and the attributing significance are just two aspects of the same phenomenon. It's sort of like a thing and its behavior, like verb and noun. Like the it's like the way the human mind works is we divide everything up into things

and the the actions of things. But,
really,
you can't really separate a thing from
the action of the thing. Um
uh assuming that just sitting there is
is is an action. You know, it's it's
behavior.

So,
a person and their behavior,
you know, the person has this body, this
noun, and their behavior, which are the
verbs, really they're it's just like uh
an illusion to separate them. And that's
the way it is with um you know,
perceiving something and directing your
attention to that thing. You know,

they're both just two aspects of the same thing.

And so,

I considered like vedana and uh sanna to be just two aspects of the same thing.

And just going with logic, if you got two things that have to arise together, they pass away together.

And I mean, there's no way you can have one without the other, then I mean, they occupy exactly the same point in time and space,

then I mean, they're just two aspects of the same thing.

So, consciousness and mental states are similar, too. I mean, it's they're they're as as far as I'm

concerned, two aspects of the very same phenomenon.

Instead of the way Abhidhamma does it, it just divides them into like absolutely different, qualitatively different from each other.

So,

do I feel studying the more refined logic of Mahayana is worthwhile? If you're into that, I mean, it's not necessary. You can become enlightened without it. But, um

if you do want to be knowledgeable with regard to, you know, Buddhist philosophy, or

um

if you're just sort of a logical person,
and that kind of just thinking
logically, like um investigating
Buddhist philosophy with with some
Buddhist logic behind you, um yeah,
that's it's worthwhile, I think.

Like Nagarjuna was a was a kind of
logician.

And he's uh
like a Mahayanist patriarch.

And he's he's definitely profound. I
consider him to be one of the greatest
philosophers of all time.

And he was he was uh into logic. And
like the Mulamadhyamakakarika,
which is his most famous text, it's

essentially a kind of logic text.

And uh going with Buddhist logic,
it's like you've got four different
possibilities with regard to any kind of
um like question. You know, you've got
yes, you've got no, you've got yes and
no, and you've got neither yes nor no.

And uh

he he he attributes that that fourfold
um division of possible answers to
pretty much everything in in
demonstrates that none of them really
apply. The whole thing is just invalid.

But, um

I think I'm digressing again. So, I'll
just move on to the next question. And

this is from Hayits Tig.

And Hayits Tig says, "Is it possible to ordain for a relatively brief period, say 1 to 3 years in the Theravada tradition?"

And so I would say to

to you that Hey, it's Teague is uh

um he doesn't know about Burmese or Thai

Buddhism because not only can you be

ordained for a relatively brief period

of 1 to 3 years, you can be ordained for

1 to 3 days.

That uh there are a lot of old Burmese

guys who brag about how many times

they've been ordained as a monk. You

know, some of them are way up into

double digits.

Because it's just their tradition like during the New Year's festival or on their vacation from work, they just go and get ordained for you know, a week or whatever.

And um

it's it's called a in Burma, it's called a Don Labha ordination. Don Labha is uh the Burmese pronunciation of Doola Bha, which means hard to hard to uh get, hard to obtain. Because

um human life is hard to obtain.

You know, most most beings in this universe are not human and to be uh to be a human during a time when you've got Dharma in the world is even

more rare and more difficult. And to actually be exposed to monks and to have the opportunity to be ordained as a monk, that's is very rare. So the Burmese consider it to be very meritorious for a man or or for a boy to be ordained into the Sangha. Boys would be ordained as novices rather than uh fully ordained monks.

And it's

it's I mean, even the King of Thailand does this. The It's a tradition that the King of Thailand, before you know, when he's still like a teenager, he'll be ordained and even though he's he's soon to be the king or maybe he already

is king, he'll still he'll take his bowl
and and walk for alms through the
through the village, probably getting
like really first-rate food from rich
people wanting to give the king food.

But um

yeah, it's it's fairly easy, especially
in Burma. You You don't even really have
to be a Buddhist in a lot of places.

Um

So yeah, the answer to that is yeah.

I'll just move on to the next question.

But I mean, if you want to go to a
Burmese meditation center and you're
qualified to be ordained as a as a monk
and you you could just be ordained as a

monk for the month that you're there or
the 2 weeks that you're there or
whatever if they're willing to do that.
So I'll just uh move on to the next
question. This is from Sacha.

S A C H A

And Sacha asks, do you have the
impression that your defilements have
been reduced by your years of practice?
And I would say yeah.

Yeah, I mean, there's definitely results
from from effort.

Even if you don't notice the results,
especially at first, still there's
definitely any effort you make to
practice Dharma is going to yield fruit.

Um just like what I was saying about

fear earlier, just learning just the basics of of Buddhist mindfulness where you can detach from any kind of pleasant or unpleasant, especially unpleasant mental state, you know, it's it's so that it's not you anymore. Like it's not I'm pissed off, it's just anger is arising.

Or you know, I'm I'm afraid, it just becomes, you know, fear is arising and then you observe the fear.

So that kind of thing has helped, just understanding things a little better, understanding karma better.

Um

it it's definitely helpful. But then again, I mean, this is kind of a logical fallacy, I think, because it's hard to say

uh what kind of mental and spiritual state I would be in if I just had never become a monk in the first place.

You know, it's it's hard to say. Maybe uh

you know, having a wife and kids would somehow be fulfilling some kind of need that I had deep down or something. I'm not sure. Or maybe just uh having picking the wrong girl to marry and uh just being put through the wringer, you know, it would be like a huge ascetic practice and paying off some huge karmic

debt or something. I don't know.

But um my impression is

that

having been a monk for 30 years has
definitely had a positive effect on my
spiritual state.

So I will move on to the next question.

This is from Mon Compt.

I think I spelled I pronounced that
right. Mon Compt.

And Mon Compt says

can insight happen without the jhanas or
tranquility,

stillness of mind? I see so many people
do like insight meditation and actually
to me it sounds so weird because it's

something that I never caused, but rather something that occurs by itself once I got out of jhana or before jhana, once you've reached a fair amount of tranquility, stillness of mind.

Uh can insight happen without the jhanas?

Um yeah, insight can happen without the jhanas. Although it is true, I do not like the whole equation

of ins- of insight with mindfulness.

Like mindfulness meditation in the West is called Vipassana, which is the Pali word for insight.

So yeah, I mean, they're very different.

Practicing mindfulness is something that

you do, but insight is something that spontaneously arises. And it can spontaneously arise after jhana.

Like you come out of a jhanic state where you're not thinking anymore and then insight can arise. Like for example, a very a very simple one is you get into a meditative state where you're not thinking, you're just wide awake and your mind is just empty and clear.

You know, it's not blank. You're you're you're more awake than you are normally.

But

you realize, you have this insight that when you stop thinking, you don't just become unconscious. In

fact, you become in some ways more conscious than before when you were thinking.

Partly because if you're thinking, your attention is focused on your thoughts.

You know, if you're perceiving anything, your attention is focused on what you're perceiving and thereby limiting it.

You're ignoring everything around it to some degree. Whereas if you're not thinking anything, you're not perceiving anything in particular, your mind is like a mirror, it's all there with equal clarity.

Like a like a cheap camera that doesn't require any kind of focus, everything is just equally in focus.

But um it's

I mean, you can

you can have insight without without

jhana, definitely, just through

practicing mindfulness. Like like I was

saying earlier, if you're mindful of

fear, for example, so that you create

this detachment, you the insight can

arise, well, the fear isn't me, it's

just this mental state that's arising.

And so long as you don't get lost in it,

it's not you.

So yeah, I mean, it can happen either

way.

And uh some people that do attain jhana

or they're they do um tranquility

meditation instead of mindfulness

meditation, um it just becomes like a substitute for narcotics, you know, they just go into the zone. You know, they just bliss out.

And um

they don't really get much benefit from it. I've I've met a lot of people who really good meditators, they just sit like a statue

for, you know, they can sit there for 2 hours. But then when they get up, they're just as messed up as they were before. It's like it didn't seem to do them any good. It's just it's just like they've got a compartmentalized mind.

You know, different rooms.

And uh just this one compartment of their mind got really good at meditation, but it doesn't really translate into the rest of their personality.

So I mean, that happens, too.

Um the Buddha did

I mean, going with the suttas, the suttas really emphasize the importance of jhana. You know, like in the Mahasatipatthana Sutta, right right concentration is defined as the four jhanas.

So

jhana is something that's good to cultivate if you can. It's much more

difficult for a layperson to cultivate
it than a monk who's just full-time
meditator.

Um mindfulness generally works better
for laypeople
and especially westernly people who are
compulsive thinkers anyway.

Um

Let's see.

Have I answered this question
sufficiently?

I'll ask the question again. Can insight
happen without the jhanas or
tranquility, stillness of mind? I see so
many people do like insight meditation
and actually to me it sounds so weird
because it's something that I never

caused, but rather something that occurs by itself once I got out of jhana or before jhana, once you've reached a fair amount of tranquility, stillness of mind. Well, even if you're practicing mindfulness, there's

uh

at least your mind is calming down.

So there's that, too.

Uh and and mindfulness and and uh

like jhana or or samatha meditation,

um they're not mutually exclusive. I

mean, you can have both going on at the

same time. In fact, uh fourth jhana is

called purity of mindfulness.

So the more mindful you get, the more

calm your mind is going to be, at least
in a certain extent to a certain extent.

I mean, if you're being mindful of of
anger or something, still there's that
still place that's watching the anger.

So, I'll just move on to the next
question here.

The answer to that one was uh yes.

So, this one, another one, can we fall
down into becoming information junkies?

Let me explain. I see so many people,
including myself, spending more time
ingurgitating information and theory
about the path than actually meditating
or being mindful. So, my second question
would be how long should we spend on
studying and practicing?

Well, yeah, I mean, ultimately, it's not thinking that's going to get you enlightened. You're not going to understand reality by thinking about it or thinking about anything, really.

I mean, there have been a few like um there's a famous

uh English monk, Nyanavira,

who believed that he had become uh an Arya just by

thinking while he was doing meditation, walking meditation. You know, he's just like hammering out this

super intellectual understanding of Dhamma.

And he thought that he became an Arya by

just by hitting on this intellectual
right view, but

like I like I said before, you're you're
not going to understand reality by
thinking about it. So,

um

it's like

thinking

it I mean, the best use you can use for
thinking is to help you stop thinking.

It's it's like

um the more you know, the more you
realize you don't know, kind of a thing.

Um there was a Mahayana text. I got the
the quote written down here somewhere.

It's like the purpose of Lord Buddha is
to liberate us from our thinking by

means of our thinking.

Or like the the words of the Zen master
like the the arrows of a of a master
archer who can shoot down another arrow
in midair.

And so, the the words of the Zen master
just kind of hit the words of the person
he's talking to, and then they just both
fall down to the ground, and you just
got this this emptiness behind. So,
that's like the best use for
for thinking other than
um as a detector. That's one of
the best uses for intellect is uh it can
help you from believing
So, critical thinking

um can be very useful, at least as a way of defending yourself against you know, crappy views.

So,

uh

so, question here is how long

uh should we spend on studying and practicing? Well, I mean, you for different people, it's going to be different amounts.

You just want to study enough that you know how and why to practice correctly.

And that that should be sufficient. But, I mean, we do have like a restless, hungry kind of mind, so sometimes just feeding it information um can be the lesser two evils. Otherwise, you might

just be like climbing the walls with boredom or some such.

But, as a general rule, really what you need to know is how and why to practice, including how and why to meditate correctly.

And um you should never be too sure that you already know. Even if you think you know,

still uh it's good to be open-minded and continue exposing yourself to uh various various points of view, with including, you know, different roots, spiritual systems.

So,

the question uh how long should we spend

studying and practicing?

Um

as little as possible for you to be, you know, at peace. Like uh one of the the founder of the tradition which I was ordained, Venerable Tong Pao Lu Seattle, had uh his spiritual advice or just a little motto

is uh

eat less, sleep less, think less, talk less. And uh probably read less would be another one you could add to that.

So, I mean, you're definitely going to have better luck um practicing Dhamma correctly

in a forest with a like some meditation master than you would at at Oxford

University in like a Buddhist studies program.

Um Ajahn Chah used to say that uh scholar monks usually don't get anywhere just because they're they're just emphasizing intellect, and enlightenment is not intellectual. Like true wisdom is not intellectual.

And you just if you just get stuck in that, which is what like scientific materialists do, they're just completely stuck in this intellectual approach of perceiving things, which is like symbolizing the world, and then acting as though the symbols have this one-to-one correlation with reality,

when uh that is not necessarily the case.

So,

I think I'll just move on to the next question here. This is from Ancient Minds.

So, I welcome Ancient Minds to the Q&A because I don't think he's asked anything before or she or they. I guess it's minds in plural.

How did the first self, whether human, animal, or vegetative, become embodied when there was not yet karma?

Well, that's kind of an interesting question,

but the answer is there was no first self.

From the Buddhist point of view, samsara is beginningless and presumably endless.

And so,

um it's just it's always been this way.

There was no first

um

being

to become embodied. Or or going with my

old uh simile of the block of marble, I

mean, the block of marble always has and

always will have an infinite number of

like virtual statues contained within

it.

And this that's the way samsara is. It

always has had and always will have an

infinitude

of of beings

because they're possible.

And if it's possible, it's going to happen in an infinite universe.

So, yeah, it's it's kind of an academic question since there was no first self.

So, Ancient Minds asks the next question here is karma is like momentum? Question mark, question mark. I thought karma was a condition that requires a subject to be put under said condition,

a subject capable of performing actions.

Well, ultimately, there is no subject.

Yeah, karma

literally from the Buddhist point of view, is cetana or

usually translated as volition, although

I think will or even urge

might be a better translation than than
uh volition.

So, karma is like Schopenhauer's will.

It's just this

sort of a

um

usually or often, I will

um describe it as just the the momentum
of your mental states. It's like the
verb aspect of your mental states.

So, I guess earlier when I was talking
about feeling and perception, that was
that was wrong. It was like volition and
perception.

So, it's the perception of of you know,

S-

interpreting something when the the
volition of directing your attention to
it in order to interpret it. So, yeah, I
was confused a little earlier. It was
it's been a long time since I wrote that
first essay.

Um

so, I consider volition and perception
to be two aspects of the same thing.

Uh

so, at least I at least I caught that
one. Sometimes I'll misspeak, I'll say
the wrong thing, and then I don't notice
it until after I see the video.

So, karma is yeah, it's like the
momentum of your mental states of of

like your

your judgments, your your perceptions,

and so forth. And

um if you are not fully conscious, it

acts as just the force of habit. It's

like an autopilot that just keeps

pushing you through life.

So, whenever you're not fully conscious,

which uh for most people is pretty much

always, then, you know, they're just um

running on automatic pilot, and that

automatic pilot is uh a manifestation of

karma.

So, I mean, it can be interpreted

differently. Most people will interpret

karma as just like some

um

as yet undiscovered law of physics like

uh

um what's his name?

Isaac Newton. You know, every action has an equal and opposite reaction. So, if you do this, then then the equal thing will have to happen back to you, kind of a thing. And there is a certain element of that, but ultimately, karma is a mental state.

And it's uh sort of a

a process mental state. It's like a verb mental state instead of just a static, you know, single mental state. It's like this flow,

you know, it's like the the stream of of

volition or of will, like Schopenhauer's will.

So, I'll just move on to the next question from Rafi 46.

How important are Buddhaghosa's commentaries on the Pali Canon in Theravada Buddhism? Well, that depends on what country you're in, what tradition you are following.

Um

I really can't speak much for Thai Theravada or Sinhalese Theravada.

Uh I think they probably don't put as much emphasis on Buddhaghosa.

Ironically, since Buddhaghosa was uh writing his commentaries in Sri Lanka.

But, in Burma

to some degree, Buddhagosaism is even more important than Buddhism.

Which is uh it's it's kind of ironic, and it used to really bug me as a monk.

But, when you're

like in Burma, they've got like a a medieval attitude towards Buddhism. Like it's sort of like a medieval Christian attitude. Like medieval European attitude towards, you know, the Catholic Church. It's similar

um among

Burmese monks that it's like everything in the books is correct. Everything in the tradition is true, it's right. And that includes the commentaries, because

sometimes the commentaries from the Burmese point of view are more important than the suttas themselves.

Because if in the sutta, the Buddha says blue, but the commentary says, "Well, when he said blue, what he really meant was red." If you didn't have the commentary, you wouldn't know that it really means red when the Buddha says blue.

And that may sound like kind of a joke, but you know, there there are plenty of cases. Like one of the most famous is where the Buddha says that because of ordaining nuns, Buddhism or the Saddhamma, the true Dhamma, will last

for only 500 years.

Um, and the commentary says, "Well, when he said 500, what he meant was 5,000."

Cuz they couldn't really go with 500 because the commentaries weren't even written down until more than 500 years later, and they couldn't

um you know, they couldn't entertain the possibility that you know, they weren't really Buddhists anymore, that true Dhamma had died already.

So, how important are Buddhaghosa's commentaries on the Pali Canon? I I've met a few maybe several Western monks that never bothered to even read even the Visuddhimagga.

Um, but I mean, if you want to be informed, you know, you want to um be literate and educated in Theravada Buddhism, it's good to be familiar with the commentaries.

Um, a lot of the time the commentators are just guessing.

They don't really know. You know, and then and usually they don't admit that they're guessing. So, that they just make a guess, sometimes it's a wrong guess, and then that just gets it just ossifies into dogma, where that's the way it is, even if it's not correct.

So, let's see. How important are

Buddhaghosa's commentaries on the Pali Canon in Theravada Buddhism? Uh again, it's like to a Western Theravada Buddhist, it's there's almost no real um

you know, they're they're just not authoritative. Like I never considered the commentaries to be authoritative. I could see plainly enough that in some ways they deviate from the text, in some ways they misinterpret the texts.

Um

But, if you're if you're just a devout like Burmese Buddhist monk with a pre-modern attitude and you just cannot doubt any of it.

Like somewhere in the commentaries it

says that the Buddha was 27 ft tall.

And there was a Tipitakadhara

Mingun Tipitakadhara. And a

Tipitakadhara is someone who has

memorized the entire three pitakas

by heart. So, it's like 40 volumes.

So, it's like you got somebody who has

memorized by heart like the Encyclopedia

Britannica, including like the knowledge

in brief.

And this man was was brilliant. I mean,

not only did he have a really good

memory, but he was like a real

intellectual scholar. But, because he

was Burmese, he could not doubt that the

Buddha was 27 ft tall. So, he had to

come up with this elaborate theory. I mean, he read the suttas well enough to know that the Buddha really wasn't that much taller than anybody else. I mean, he was tall, but he wasn't taller than a giraffe.

So, he had this theory that well, in the Buddha's time, people were more virtuous, and because they were more virtuous, the gods loved them more, including the gods who controlled the weather or who can influence the weather. So, the the weather was more conducive to growing nutritious crops, the rains were timely and so forth, no droughts, or not nearly as many, the food was more nutritious, and so

everybody was way bigger than they are now. And that's that's how he had to deal with the commentary saying the Buddha was 27 ft tall. He could not doubt it.

But, I mean

commentaries say things that uh I mean, even the texts themselves say things that a modern or post-modern Westerner cannot believe easily.

So, I'll just move on to the next question.

And this is from Bpat427.

And Bpat427 says, "Who's creating more bad karma, a psychopath who kills people for fun with no accompanying negative

mental states afterwards, or a mentally stable person who kills with wholesome motivation to protect others and feels regret afterwards?"

Um, I would say

I mean, it's it's going to vary from person to person. I mean, you can't just give a blanket explanation because um like for example, the the mentally stable person who kills with wholesome motivation to protect others and feels regret afterwards, well, I mean, how much regret?

That kind of a thing, you know, or how did they kill the others? You know, it's going to depend a lot on the mental states of the individual.

Like it's going to depend entirely on the mental states of the individual.

So,

all in all though, in general, I would say the psychopath who is devoid of compassion and devoid of any kind of conscience

um at least at the conscious level is going to be creating much more bad karma.

Um

partly because

like a psychopath

they have almost no access to the subconscious mind. It's like they're completely cut off from the deeper

levels of their own mind, but those deeper levels are still there. So, deep down at like a subconscious level, they're aware of the suffering they're causing to others. You know, it's it's having an effect on them. It's just not at a conscious level.

And that's that's kind of the way karma works, too. It's it's it's you know, we're not aware of what direction we are heading, but it's it's in there. It's it's at a subconscious level.

So, the psychopath is is causing like severe subconscious damage to himself.

And without without knowing or caring at the conscious level.

But, uh some people, I mean, they can be well-intentioned, but then they'll do something. Even maybe they killed somebody accidentally, and then they'll just have they'll just be like eaten up with remorse afterwards.

And that remorse is really worse karma than like if you accidentally kill somebody. Let's say you're you're working on a roof and you drop a hammer accidentally and it hits someone in the head and kills them. Um, I mean, that was completely accidental. I mean, the person hasn't necessarily done anything wrong other than just not being fully

conscious, which you know, is pretty much everybody. You know, everybody can make a mistake.

And so,

um almost all of the bad karma they're going to get from killing that person is going to be from regret.

Or just being upset from when the person's family is calling them a murderer or whatever. But, um

So, I mean, the regret can just I mean, a person could go to hell just over regrets. And it doesn't even have to be over anything

good. I mean, like you can have a devout Jewish person who tries to follow, you know, all the the Mosaic Law. You know,

they try to be completely kosher. And then one day they eat some apple pie, and it turns out there was lard in the crust, cuz lard makes really good pie crust. And there was like the person didn't realize that you know, they didn't think. And then so, this Jewish person eats the lard, and according to the Old Testament, you you eat the fat of some animal that is not suitable for sacrifice. And much much less, you know, eating let alone eating pork. Then um that's it, you're cut off from your people. You're no longer a Jew, you're no longer one of God's chosen.

And I mean, just so I mean, that person

might just be

just

eaten up with remorse and just

completely persuaded they're going to

hell or whatever, because they

accidentally ate some pie with with lard

in the crust.

So,

again, it's going to depend on the

individuals. But, for the most part, I

think a psychopath who kills people for

fun with no accompanying negative mental

states

I mean, doing something for fun is

already it's it's got some bad karma in

it, because that's wallowing in sensual

pleasures, you know, you're you're

wallowing in sensuality, even if you're just you know, killing a prostitute for for for jollies.

Um, yeah, I mean, you're still I mean, most of these people are just following this inner compulsion.

And so, it's like it's like a strong attachment.

And so, I mean, even that is is big karma. And um

But, as I was saying, is most of the damage they are causing to themselves is subconscious, cuz a psychopath is just kind of

cut off from their deeper levels of their own mind. They're just kind of a

kind of a mind, or at least that's my interpretation.

So, let's just move on to Bipap427's next question. And this is kind of a long one because I've

I have to sort of recite some rap music lyrics, but I I won't I won't be doing the the rap kind of a thing, so please bear with me.

Um

Based on the lyrics of part three and four of this song, do you think that these rappers have at least a rudimentary grasp of Dhamma? And I'm sorry, I forgot to even record the name of the the rap song or the group that is rapping. I don't know,

those of you who are into

um

rap music, maybe you maybe you'll you'll
know this, but parts three and four of
this song, this rap uh if you can even
call rap music a song, because they're
not singing.

Okay.

Ooh ooh, could it be that heaven is
fleeting and all ways and nothing is
forever and wishing will get you
nowhere.

Ooh ooh, what a dream, go to sleep and
wake up tomorrow. Funny how I'm always
on the head of the arrow. Ooh ooh.

Ooh ooh. Funny how I'm always on the

head of the arrow. Ooh ooh. Could it be
that heaven is fleeting and all ways and
nothing is forever and wishing will get
you nowhere. Ooh ooh, what a dream, go
to sleep and wake up tomorrow. Funny how
I'm always on the head of the arrow. Ooh
ooh. Ooh ooh. Ooh ooh.

Ooh ooh ooh.

Beauty is my drug, I'm the pusher, push
it.

We think we exist, that's why we suffer,
do we not?

Sweet but treacherous is the poison,
baby. Give it to me raw, death is
beautiful.

Death is beautiful, give it to me raw.

Death is beautiful.

Give it to me raw, death is death is
beautiful. Death is beautiful, death is
beautiful, death is beautiful. Death is
beautiful, death is beautiful.

We think we exist, that's why we suffer,
do we not? Do we not? Give it to me raw,
death is death is beautiful. Death is
beautiful, death is beautiful, death is
beautiful, death is beautiful, death is
beautiful.

Do we think we we think we exist, that's
why we suffer, do we not? Do we not?

Give it to me raw, death is death is
beautiful. Beauty is my drug, I'm the
pusher. We think we exist, that's why we
suffer, do we not? Sweet but treacherous

is the poison, baby. Give it to me raw,
death is beautiful.

So, let's get back up here to the
question cuz I've uh

Okay. Based on the lyrics of parts three
and four of this song, which I just
recited to you,

now you know I am not a rapper.

Do you think that these rappers have at
least a rudimentary grasp of Dhamma?

Yeah, I'd say they've got at least a
rudimentary grasp. Let's see, there's
there's a few kind of Dhamma statements
in here.

Heaven is fleeting and all ways and
nothing is forever and yes.

Yeah, anicca.

Nothing is everything is inconstant.

See, ooh ooh, what a dream, go to sleep
and wake up tomorrow. Well, it's not
necessarily anything, let's see.

Heaven is fleeting and nothing is
forever. I already said that part.

So,

beauty is my drug, I'm the pusher, push
it. I don't think so.

We think we exist, that is why we
suffer.

Yeah, I mean that could be interpreted
as some kind of Buddhism or something.

So, yeah, I mean

they might not be familiar with

Buddhism, maybe they are familiar with

Buddhism.

I don't know, but uh there's yeah, at least a rudimentary insight in there.

But uh that would not be sufficient for me to actually encourage people to listen to rap music.

So, we'll just move on to the next question here.

What do you think are some prerequisites for someone who wants to ordain as a Theravada monk?

Well, first of all, you should uh have faith in Theravada Buddhism.

Secondly,

you should uh be free of debt. I mean, it's technically you should not be ordained

if you are um in debt. If you've got any kind of obligations that you could be required by law to fulfill, then technically you're not supposed to be ordained as a monk.

If you're a runaway slave, that's out, too.

Um

So, if you want to be a Theravada monk, you want to be a correct one, you want to be a good one, not just a clueless one, like one of those people that ordains for 2 weeks, you know, they still got all their money, they don't know the rules, they just think that they're just magically going to get good

karma by wearing monk robes and going through a 20-minute-long ordination ceremony.

Um

Yeah, if you're going to be a monk, try to be a good one, try to follow the rules, which means you have to get rid of all of your money before you become a monk.

And uh

follow the rules, study the rules before you become a monk so that you'll know what rules to follow.

You know, pay off your debts and get everything straightened out, you know, clean your room, all that before you go to the monastery to be ordained.

And uh you should be okay.

So, let's move on to the next question, which is from Chaplin.

Chaplin says, "What should I look for when searching for a spiritual teacher online or in my region as far as credentials?"

Well,

credentials,

with regard to like degrees or certificates or years under this master or whatever, it doesn't necessarily count for very much.

Um cuz I mean, spirituality is not something that really you can uh verify with a piece of paper.

Um

So, I think the first thing you should search for is uh spiritual teacher is telling you things are actually useful to you.

You know,

um if they're helping you to be happier, helping you to understand reality, then that's good.

Um you may want to look into their their personal conduct. You know, I mean, if they're just going from one female disciple to another to another, um that would turn off a lot of people.

Um

Yeah, I mean, any kind of like a teaching certificate from Spirit Rock, I

mean, that would that would like rule them out pretty much already.

Yeah, a spiritual credentials from Spirit Rock, I think that's a disqualifier right there.

Um

Yeah, any any of the kind of woke places where

um

you know, they're trying to recruit teachers of color just for the sake of diversity and inclusion.

Yeah, that's that's not so good.

But um

like a spiritual teacher, one of the best things

you can do is just observe the spiritual teacher

and see if they get upset, you know, see if they they're cantankerous, you know, they're they're like in a get in a bad mood sometimes. That's one of the best ways of of kind of you can't really tell how wise another person is um

if they're wiser than you. You can't really comprehend greater wisdom than yourself except maybe through

you know, when things are going

pear-shaped, you know, things are just you know,

the shit's hitting the fan and they

remain calm and serene, that's a good

indication that they've got wisdom.

But um

mainly I think you're better off just
if they've got a book or they've got
videos or something, watch those and if
it really resonates with you, it seems
to help you, then

um

you can you can avail yourself of what
they have to offer
uh at least provisionally.

I mean, you don't may not want to throw
yourself at their feet and declare them
your guru for the rest of your life.

But um

also like um

the uh endorsements of other people you

consider to be wise would be good, like
uh

like Ram Dass has very strongly endorsed
Neem Karoli Baba and that's one of the
reasons why I became interested in Neem
Karoli Baba. And uh

So, yeah, out of respect for Ram Dass,
but um

yeah, there there are a lot of of high
what do you call them? Just
charlatans. There are a lot of
charlatans out there.

And then uh in in the modern West, it's
just spiritual Siberia
where you can have people that don't
have much spirituality
any much spiritual depth or maturity or

wisdom going on, but nevertheless

they're

they've got something going on, you

know, they're good sales people or

something. And uh

they they get famous or make lots of

money or you know, become the head

teacher somewhere.

So, it is true, you should be skeptical

and and watch people carefully and if

they're doing things that you thoroughly

disapprove of,

um

then yeah, you can have to question

that.

But um

mainly I mean, the main thing I've done
is just you know, you read their book or
you

you you listen to what they have to say
and if it really resonates in a deep
place, you know, just intuitively, you
just you just feels right,

then that's one of the best things you
can do

uh to to decide whether they're going to
be helpful to you or not.

And um

again, just accept them provisionally. I
mean, you don't want to just dedicate
your life to this person just because um
you know, they seem legit because they
may turn out to be not as legit as they

seem.

Cuz that's the charlatans are really good at seeming more legit than they really are.

So, we'll just move on to Chaplin's next question.

And that is, are there any mainstream Western literary novels that aren't necessarily Buddhist, but have an underlying Buddhist theme?

And that's an interesting question. I've been thinking about this recently.

Um like, for example,

you I've I've considered like thinking about the the Christian books I've read before. You know, I've read the Bible.

I've read

um

Science and Health with Key to the
Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy, which
counts as, you know, like

I've read the Book of Mormon.

I've read like um the autobiography of
Saint Teresa of Ávila. I've read the the
Ascent of Mount Carmel by by Saint John
of the Cross. But, also,

I've read like

Dostoevsky's novel The Idiot.

And

I mean, does that count as Christian
literature? Obviously, Dostoevsky was
profoundly Christian, and the idiot,
Prince Myshkin in the novel, symbolizes

Christ

at at least one level of the novel.

And so, um

in a way, I mean, you can

it it almost acts like scripture. You

know, you can read certain um Christian

literature that's just but written by a

Christian person who's just sort of

permeating what they're writing with

their their beliefs, and you're picking

up, you know, sort of the wisdom um of

what this person is trying to convey

just from reading a novel. And I've been

I've thought about like Buddhism, you

know, there's obviously way less

Buddhist literature in the West than

Christian literature because, of course,
the West is traditionally Christian.

Um Buddhism hasn't been around in the
West for very long.

But, um

there are

uh there are some some stories you can
read that are are Buddhist. I mean,
one thing you can do is find
translations of Asian books.

Like uh Alex Wayman

translated Monkey, you know? So, that
kind of counts as Western literature, at
least it's in English.

Um

but with regard to a Buddhist author
writing original Buddhist stuff,

um my best guess would be J.D. Salinger. That I remember when I was living in a cave in Burma, this American monk came to visit me, and he was telling me about how he read in some Buddhist magazine that The Catcher in the Rye was a Buddhist novel. And that just seemed ridiculous to me at the time. It's like, I didn't see it at all. I just started making cracking jokes about it. Yeah, I was like, Gilligan's Island's like a Buddhist parable, also. You know, we were thinking, you know, Ginger would be Tara, and so forth. But, then, years later, I read like the unofficial sequel to The Catcher in the

Rye, which is Franny and Zooey by J.D.

Salinger. And that was clearly Buddhist.

I mean,

they had

I mean, there's mention of

you know, the the sacred books of the

East and a poly polygrammers on their

bookcase, and and Zooey

um I think it was Zooey. He said that um

he has to recite the bodhisattva vows

before he eats. He he one time he just

deliberately skipped reciting the

bodhisattva vows before he ate, and he

almost choked to death on a clam. And I

mean, it was just more blatantly

Buddhist, so that you

translate that back to The Catcher in

the Rye, which is very similar to this Glass family that that Salinger was working on later after writing The Catcher in the Rye. And then, you can see, yeah, The Catcher in the Rye really is it's Mahayana Buddhist, apparently.

But, um if you look for it, it's there. And that's really the only one I can think of. There's really not a lot. I I assume there's lots and lots of Buddhist literature, like Buddhist novels, and so forth. Some of them most of them probably, you know, second or third rate at best.

But, uh Salinger is worth reading, and

and he definitely had a spiritual side to him, definitely.

Like um he wrote a short story called Teddy

about this

9-year-old kid from New York City.

I think he was nine, approximately nine, who was in this completely dysfunctional family. His parents just hate each other. He's got like this little sociopath of a sister.

And

I mean, he remembers his past lives. He was like this Indian

uh like a yogi

who uh

he just he he could have become

enlightened in his past life, but he he dropped out and uh just kind of wallowed in sensuality, which delayed him one life. And so, to kind of to compensate karmically for his his deviation, he he got reborn into this totally dysfunctional family.

But, he was essentially an enlightened being. And he's explaining it to this other guy who was saying that uh he was just a little kid watching his his his little sister drinking milk uh sitting in her high chair, and then all of a sudden it just struck him it it was God pouring God into God. Which isn't very Buddhist. I mean, it

was more Hindu, but um there's a lot of that in Salinger. So, um if you're interested in some kind of, you know, Eastern philosophy um like permeating or infusing uh Western fiction,

I I would suggest Salinger just largely because I can't think of anybody else.

And Salinger is a good writer.

So, I'll just uh move on to the next question, which is the last question.

And it's from Diane, who always gets the question in right before I do the video.

Just it's just, you know, just like in the in the action movies when the the guy rolls right underneath the the big iron door right before it closes. Her

questions are like that.

And her question here is,

"Who created God, or did God create himself?"

And this is kind of reminiscent of that question up above that I that I already answered about like, how did the first being,

you know, start making karma? And there just was no first being. And

um let's just set aside the whole idea of God as the angry old man with the long white beard, you know, much more epic than this one, sitting on the throne up in heaven with the the angels, you know?

You know, it's sort of like Santa Claus, except less jolly and with angel helpers instead of elves.

Um

yeah, if you just set aside that, and interpret God as

just ultimate reality, sort of like

Brahman in in in Vedantist Hinduism,

then God was not created. God has no beginning and no end.

You know, God is the block of marble

that's always been there, and then

everything else is just sort of

virtually,

you know, conditionally there inside,

so to speak.

So, yeah, if assuming that there is a

capital G God, which is like the
absolute, the capital A absolute, just
ultimate reality, the highest
the highest truth, the highest reality,
um yeah, it's it's uncreated. It's
unconditioned. Like it like nirvana in
Buddhism is unconditioned. It has no
cause, no effect, no beginning, no end.
It's like completely outside of time.

So,

um

yeah, so who created God? Nobody created
God. God didn't even create himself
because

God is uncreated, just always been
there, always will be. There's

absolutely nothing that could possibly cause ultimate reality to change or or disappear or anything like that.

So, that was the last question. And I'm creaking the chair again.

Um

so, uh I hope you uh are

more or less satisfied,

or at least somewhat intrigued by my

attempts to answer these questions. If

you have any questions yourself about

meditation,

about living living as a monk in Burma,

whatever, anything you think I might be

able to answer, you're welcome to ask it

in the comments below.

And please uh like and or subscribe.

And uh take a look at the URL links,
including uh

my my first three books are down in the
links, or they should be.

And uh be happy.

Hello, and welcome to episode 35 of
Question and Answer. I am your host,
Punya Bassam.

And this episode is maybe not going to
last quite as long as most because I
didn't get quite as many questions,
partly because somehow the the Q&A
announcement didn't wind up on
SubscribeStar.

So,

um

even so, I'm I'm pretty pretty
consistent lately with one Q&A every 2
weeks. So, we'll just see how it goes.

And

without any further ado, I think I will

uh

start answering questions to the best of my abilities.

And the first one is from

Achala, a c a l a.

And Achala says,

"What are your views on Ajahn Brahm's statement that Abhidhamma was not taught by the Buddha?"

Well, most Western monks, possibly most educated Western Buddhists would agree

that Abhidhamma was not taught by the Buddha. I used

and and I used to live in Burma. I lived in Burma for more than 20 years, and in Burma it's just a standard belief that

Abhidhamma is the most profound and most important teachings of the Buddha.

They consider Abhidhamma to be more important than all the rest.

But, Western Buddhists

um don't have the same faith-oriented attitude towards Buddhism.

And uh the evidence does indicate that

Abhidhamma did not exist

until after the time of the Buddha. And

it probably was not added to the

Tipitaka until around the time of the third council.

Is that right? Yeah, around the third

council, around the time of the the uh

Emperor Ashoka.

So, there's lots of evidence and um

I uh

I don't have it here, but um there is
lots of evidence and um

I mean, you can look it up yourself. Um
it's it would be in an appendix to my
Atthasalini translation that's on the
website nipapancha.org
if you're interested.

But, um like in the in the Canon,
there's no real mention of the
Abhidhamma Pitaka or of Abhidhamma
philosophy. There are a few suttas where
it will say that monks are sitting
around discussing Abhidhamma and
Abhivinaya.

But, um since it was never an Abhivinaya

Pitaka, probably all that means is they're just discussing like finer points on Dhamma and Vinaya.

And um

let's see. The like in the canonical histories of the first two councils, there's no mention at all of Abhidhamma. Like in the first council, it was Venerable Upali recited Vinaya, Venerable Ananda recited the suttas, and that was it. That was all there was to the council.

Um the the Burmese would say that Abhidhamma would be included in the Khuddaka Nikaya of the Sutta Pitaka, but that is uh

kind of stretching it, I think, or pushing it or something.

So,

there I mean, there are statements in Abhidhamma that are not in complete accordance with the suttas. For example, according to Abhidhamma philosophy,

um

there are two stages to becoming an ariya. Like uh sotapanna, sakadagami, and anagami or an arahat, the four stages of sainthood. There's two two like stages of each one of these. One is fruit or one is path and one is fruit.

And according to Abhidhamma,

um the

the the path lasts just one moment. Just

immediately, I mean, it's just like this transitional state that lasts, you know, like a trillionth of a second, essentially.

And um in the suttas, I mean, it's it's talking about how people of path or fruit are worthy of, you know, respect and and and, you know, donations and so forth. So, um yeah, you couldn't really pay respect to somebody in less than a trillionth of a second.

And uh it is

it it's pretty clear that I mean,

Abhidhamma

continued to develop after the the um

the Tipitaka was closed.

So, a lot of the the most important teachings of Abhidhamma that are taught in Abhidhamma classes are actually from the commentaries to the Abhidhamma rather than Abhidhamma itself.

For example, the whole cittavithi or the 17 mind moments that have to occur for any kind of mental state to fully arise, I mean, that's just in the commentaries.

So,

yeah, I mean, if you study up on it, it's it's pretty it's pretty likely it's pretty obvious, in fact, that uh Abhidhamma um developed later on. In fact, I one of the one of the clinchers

is that

um the suttas and the rules of monastic discipline are fairly similar for all of the early schools of Buddhism.

They're

I would guess that like in the suttas, it's maybe 85% the same just throughout all the old schools that we know of.

But, Abhidhamma is completely different for each school.

Even the

the um

Sabbatthivādins, the Sarvāstivādins, and the Theravādins, which probably split apart around the time of the third council, like during the time of Ashoka.

Uh so, they're they're relatively closely related. They split apart relatively late. But, even so, their Abhidhamma Pitakas, both both schools have an Abhidhamma, but or Abhidharma it would be called for the Sarvāstivādins cuz they use Sanskrit. There's not a single book that's the same. They're just almost completely different.

So, that is good evidence that it didn't exist or it wasn't part of the Tipitaka until during or after the third council for Theravāda.

But, um I'll just move on to the next question.

I I spent a lot of time bashing

Abhidhamma. Not saying that it's bad or anything, but just pointing out that it can be useful for some people, like really intellectual people that like systematizing and classifying everything. But, um it's it's not going to get you enlightened.

Um there's there's no story of anybody becoming enlightened from hearing Abhidhamma.

So, I'll just I'll just move on to the next question.

Just so I don't spend an hour just ranting on Abhidhamma.

So, the next question is from JT Drake.

And JT Drake says,

"With regards to the paranormal and trickster element discussion at the end of uh it was it was one of my videos. I tend to think that there may be something to the high weirdness path of thinking of John Keel, Jacques Vallée, and others, which suggests that there is an adjacent reality dimension, et cetera, that leaks into our world and that is similar but different enough as to be difficult to understand. Any thoughts on that?"

Well, yeah, I would say that there is an infinite number of adjacent realities.

That I mean, it's like the many worlds

hypothesis. Any in an infinite universe, anything that possibly can exist does exist. And so, what's keeping the weirdness at bay according to the the theory that was discussed here, like um the trickster element. It's um the the whole idea that I've been playing with comes from a book called The Trickster and the Paranormal by George P. Hansen.

And again, I I've discussed this a number of times, but he says that there are certain rules that keep everything more or less stable and predictable. But, there are like weak spots between the rules. And these rules are not just

laws of physics. Apparently, the laws of physics aren't enough for us people because our minds are so complicated. So, we got to make new we got to make additional rules, just like societal rules and taboos and and just political incorrectness and and just uh just all sorts of we have we have to have extra rules in order to make things more or less stable and predictable. And uh it's there are weak points in between the rules, or sometimes people, especially like like witches and so forth, will deliberately violate taboos in order to break down the the stability of of the the structure that's keeping everything stable and predictable so

that magic or or whatever can get into the system.

And I don't think it's just one alternate reality. I mean, there's just an infinitude of other realities surrounding us.

And to some degree even pervading our world, and we just can't see a lot of it just cuz we're so locked into this structure.

So, those are my thoughts on it, I guess. So, I'll just move on to JT Drake's next question.

And JT Drake says, "Not sure I am clear on the difference between meditation, prayer, and daydreaming. Would be

interesting to hear a discussion of their differences and similarities. It seems to me that daydreaming may be similar to meditation, especially extended day dreaming.

Well, let's see. We got three things here: meditation, prayer, and day dreaming.

Prayer,

I'm pretty sure

is like asking asking favors of a higher power.

You know, like the Lord's Prayer, you know, "Forgive us our sins as we also forgive those that are indebted to us and lead us not into temptation and so forth." It's like you're petitioning

um like a higher being.

Not necessarily capital G God, I assume

uh

There have been lots of people and there

still are lots of people that that

petition small G gods and goddesses.

Um

maybe gurus and that sort of thing.

What um

So, yeah, prayer is is sort of

goal-oriented, it seems to me. It's like

you're directing some kind of petition

to a higher being in the hopes of

receiving help from that higher being.

At least that's that's the way I see it.

I'm I'm not sure if there there may be

some Christian sects that have prayer
that is more like meditation, they just
call it prayer.

But, meditation is is like
it's like
disciplining your mind.

And prayer requires some of that, too.

But, meditation, you're you're trying to
make your mind
simpler and more still. You're trying to
reduce the the the agitation and the the
wandering elements of it.

And elementary kinds of meditation, you
might be reciting

uh relatively complicated mantra or or
working beads, like the like a mala, or
just doing simple breathing meditations,

like just uh counting your breaths,
that kind of a thing. But, as your
meditation gets deeper and stronger, it
gets quieter and quieter until finally
the like the zenith of meditation,
you're just sitting there um just with
your mind just clear, silent, you know,
it's like a mirror or or
like a window pane or something.

So, you're you're wide awake, you're
still awake, you're not going into any
kind of um

like a subconscious state, like a like
hypnotic trance, something like that.

You may seem that way.

And uh some people who think they're

meditating really are hypnotizing themselves. So, there's that, too. I guess you could call self-hypnosis a kind of meditation, but in Buddhism it probably wouldn't be considered right concentration.

Um and day dreaming, I mean, that's just undisciplined. That's just your mind just wandering where it wants to go.

And I mean, if you were mindful of your day dreaming, which

um I'm not sure if how many people do this,

um but if you're just like observing yourself day dreaming, that could be a kind of mindfulness meditation. But, if you're just

you know, your mind is just kind of floating around and you're thinking about whatever you want to think, then day dreaming in that sense, it's uh just sort of an ordinary mental state.

Um my father, who was an amateur hypnotist, would say that if you're in a a day dreaming state where you're just kind of tuning out everything around you,

then that would be considered a mild trance state.

But, it wouldn't be anything near to like really deep meditation.

Because day dreaming, I mean, some you know, sort of like dreaming at

night,

I suppose. So, it's it's it's um
it's just sort of a mundane mental
state.

So, uh

I think I'll just move on to the next
question. This is from Didymus.

And Didymus says,

"A Tibetan lama I knew told me that when
he went to join a monastery, the abbot
yelled at him and said, 'What do I need
one more monk filling up my septic
tank?'" or quote unquote.

Only he didn't call it a septic tank.

LOL.

That's it. Is it a bad abbot or just a
test?

Well, I've never met him and I can't really say, but I mean, it it could go either way. For example, one of my favorite Zen koans is uh I think it's in the Mumonkan.

And uh Tozan's 60 blows, I think it's called.

And a monk went to this monastery and uh he he wanted to to live there for a while. And the abbot's asking him questions, like, "Well, where are you from?"

And the monk would just give this ordinary answer.

And then the the abbot would say, you know, "Well, where did you spend the the

rains retreat?" And then he would give just this ordinary answer. And then uh the abbot says, "I spare you 60 blows." And then he sent him away.

And so the the monk was just troubled all night. He he didn't know what he'd done wrong.

And so, he came back the next day to the abbot and said, "Yesterday you forgave me 60 blows. What did I do wrong?" And the monk or the the abbot just exploded at him. And this is a very loose paraphrase, but essentially he was saying, "Oh, you're good-for-nothing. You just move around from one place to another."

And it was at that moment that this monk

um he had a realization. I don't know if he became enlightened, but he had like a realization experience. And that that's his Zen koan, you're supposed to contemplate this.

And um

I mean, it could be along those lines where the abbot is just calling him good-for-nothing um

because in a in a way we are, you know.

And it was I don't know, it could have could have triggered something, but in this case maybe it didn't. Or or it could just be that this abbot would just have a foul disposition cuz I mean, this is all I know about this Tibetan abbot,

so I really can't say what he was going for. Although, it could be that I mean, it was something along the lines of that Zen koan of Tozan's 60 blows where uh you know, there was there was something deeper involved.

That um you know, in in a way a monk is just kind of uh person who just kind of sits around and wanders aimlessly and um you know, in a sense, you can you can sort of contemplate that.

What um

I'll just move on to the next question.

And this one is from Merry, spelled m e r r y.

And Merry says, "Is being a biologist

or has being a biologist helped your
Dharma practice in any way?"

Um

helped my Dharma practice. It's helped
my understanding of myself, which I
assume is helpful in Dharma practice.

It's helped my understanding of human
nature and just of life in general. I
mean, I've I've I've said before that um
biology and Buddhism are similar in that
they're both studies of life. You're
you're studying life in a systematic
way. It's just that the biologist
studies it from the outside and the
Buddhist studies it from the inside.

So, taking biology and Buddhism, I mean,

you're kind of studying life from both sides. You're you're sort of triangulating, which I suppose could be helpful.

But, the main thing for me is I just cannot help seeing human beings as a species of animal, and we are. And it's just a scandal to me that

psychologists throughout most of the 20th century were saying that human beings don't have animal instincts.

But, I mean, obviously they do. Like every emotion that we experience is instinctive. You know, it's just it's like universal throughout the human species.

Boys liking girls, girls liking babies,
people preferring sweet food to bitter
food, preferring the smell of baking
bread to the smell of a cat fart, all of
this kind of stuff is just built into
us.

I mean, not that all boys like girls
because, you know, homosexuality and all
that, but still it is the status quo.
It's just, you know, the way things
generally are in our species.

Laughing when something funny happens,
crying when you're sad, all of that kind
of stuff is instinctive animal behavior.
Just like opening your eyes really wide
when you're surprised. Like Charles

Darwin,

um he gave the in he wrote this really fascinating book, which is still well worth reading, The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals, where he says that um you know, when you're surprised, your eyebrows go up, you know, your eyes open wide, and that increases your peripheral vision, you can see danger more easily if your eyes are wide open. And at the same time, your mouth drops open, and you start breathing through your mouth because it's quieter for a human to breathe through their mouth, so you can hear danger more easily. And he points out that a dog a panting dog does the

exact opposite. A panting dog, if it suddenly hears a strange noise, it's surprised, it'll stop panting and prick up its ears because for a dog breathing through its nose is quieter than breathing through its mouth.

So, we've got all these instincts, and it's I don't know. I mean, it's not necessary to know this stuff um in order to become enlightened because

prehistoric or not prehistoric, but, you know, like Bronze Age or Iron Age people, I should say, you know, in the Buddha's time, I mean, it was pre-Darwinian, obviously. It's pre-

modern science.

But, still they can they can do it. But, for a Westerner who thinks along modern Western lines, uh it can be helpful, but it's not really necessary.

But, with regard to my Dharma practice, yeah. Yeah, I say it has.

It it has helped me to understand myself and others in certain ways.

So, I'll just move on to Mary's next question.

Uh let's see. Is the Theravadan concept of comma

karma

fatalistic or is there room for somewhat free choices?

Well, I've talked and written about this

one. It is kind of an interesting subject.

Is there free will in Buddhism?

And um

strangely in the sutras, the Buddha rejects apparently the only two options that um he he he rejects free will especially in the Anattalakkhana Sutta, which is considered to be his second discourse after his enlightenment, which caused his first disciples to become fully enlightened or arhats.

Um in which he says that

with regard to with none of the five khandhas can you say, "Let it be this way. Let it be that way." and have it

consistently happen. That's a sign that it's not us.

So, we don't have complete control over our will. And so, that will isn't really us because we can't really control it.

You know, it has like a will of its own, so to speak.

And it's the same way with our body and with our perceptions and with our consciousness, with our feelings.

Um

but on the other hand

there was a a sect in the Buddha's time like a non-Hinduistic

non-Buddhist sect called the Ajivikas

who were complete fatalists. They

believed in predetermination

and that you lived I think it was something like 84,000 lives. And it was just like taking a ball of string and just throwing it and it rolls out until the string is until the ball is gone and the string reaches an end.

And um

they just they just figured I mean it was part of their belief that if you became an Ajivika monk, that meant you were right up towards the end. You know, this the ball of string was almost had almost exhausted itself.

And uh the Buddha warned that that's really a dangerous point of view and that they can go to hell or have bad

things happen to them just because of adhering to this belief.

So, it's it's kind of strange that the Buddha

um rejected free will apparently and also rejected determinism. And I mean, what other choice is there? I mean, random chance is out.

So,

I've had this idea that um

I mean, it doesn't really explain it. It it I mean, it just kind of leaves it up in the air.

It's just sort of like a paradox.

And um

Ramana Maharshi, who may have been fully enlightened, although he was not a

Buddhist

he said that the only mind or the only free will that we have is the choice to be mindful or not.

Which is kind of interesting. I mean, there could be some kind of free will in Buddhism along those lines.

Um but I mean, it's either something has a cause or it doesn't. This is just the the basic logical argument. Something has a cause or it doesn't have a cause.

I mean, that's like Aristotelian thought. Either A or not A. Has

Everything has to be either A or not A.

And so,

if if your decision

has a cause, it is determined by that cause. It is not free. If you have an obvious

reason for doing something, then you're doing it you know, it's it's being caused by your perception of this obvious reason. But on the other hand, if it's doesn't have a cause, it can just occur spontaneously at any time at random. And neither of those accounts for free will.

So, I've had the idea that uh getting back to the the trickster in the paranormal when humans become self-conscious, our mind becomes self-referential and that creates a kind of logical short

circuit.

Like anything that's self-referential

can cause

or something that is self-referential

can cause paradoxes like the statement,

"This statement is false."

It's a paradoxical statement. It can be

neither true nor false because it refers

to itself.

And human consciousness refers to

itself, which may cause a kind of

logical short circuit in which free will

can somehow paradoxically

exist in some form. But

in in I mean, it just seems that free

will requires your will, your

decision-making process to be separate from everything else. You know, there would have to be a self, like a a distinct individuality that is distinct from everything else in order for you to have free will. And Buddhism just does not teach that. No matter how hard some Western Buddhists or Buddhist experts think that Buddha taught an eternal soul or some such.

Nevertheless,

um Buddhism does teach that I mean, we do not have a distinct self-existence, you know, distinct from the whole rest of the universe.

And so, that would pretty much rule out free will right there.

Ah, but there is there is room for
free Well, choices anyway. I mean, you
have choices. It's just the more
conscious you are um on the one hand the
more options you're going to have.

Just the more conscious you are, the
more options you're going to perceive,
the more you're going to see. But at the
same time, the the wiser you are, the
more likely you are to do the right
thing so that when a

like an arhat I mean, he would just he
wouldn't have any freedom left. And in a
way, he'd be free from samsara, free
from suffering and all that. But he
wouldn't make free choices cuz he would

all always necessarily do the right thing.

So, it seems to me. I mean, maybe if he's just going to choose, you know, what kind of rag he's going to wipe himself with, he's going to use the the yellow one or the orange one, you know, maybe. But that would just be like a toss-up. I mean, it wouldn't even matter.

That would just be a coin toss.

So, yeah, we can say that there is room for somewhat free choices.

I mean, we have to make choices. And if you make bad choices, you're going to pay for them. And if you make good choices, then you will reap the rewards

of those good choices.

But um the Buddha did rule out
determinism also.

So, it's just up in the air and we just
go along as though we have free will
anyway. So, it's good to make as good of
choices as you can.

And try to cultivate wisdom as well as
you can.

So, I'll just move on to Mary's third
question.

And Mary says, "I have a question that
is kind of important. Most rules are
phrased something like, 'Do not do
something unless someone is a relative.'
Who is a relative according to

Theravada?"

Um like for example

um it's very seriously against the rules
for a monk to
touch a woman with the desire to obtain
pleasure from the contact.

That that is a sanghadisesa offense. And
the monk has to be he's put on
probation. He's got to take penances
like approximately 100 penances
for 6 days and 6 nights. And then he has
to be reinstated into good standing at a
ceremony with no fewer than 20 monks who
are in good standing. And the whole
thing is a pain in the neck.

And

um so, if you touch a woman with the

desire for pleasure

then

that is a sanghadisesa offense unless
the woman is a relative.

And that mainly means

um mother, daughter, or sister.

And um I don't think aunties or grandma
or maybe granddaughters or grandmas, I'm
not sure exactly. I've spent a long time
since I've studied the rules.

But it's like close immediate family.

Sister-in-law wouldn't be close enough.

Stepmom probably wouldn't be close
enough.

Maybe, I don't know. And yeah, you'll
have to study up on that somewhere if

you can find what to study up on.

Um

find a translation of the the Vinaya texts especially with regard to uh what is it? Sanghadisesa number two if I remember correctly.

Gosh.

Let's see.

So, yeah. I mean, it's it's like a close immediate family member. Mainly mother, daughter, or sister.

So, I'll just move on to Mary's fourth and last question.

And Mary says, "I am terribly sorry, but could you please listen to In the Dead of Night talk by Ajahn Chah. It lasts half an hour. It is on YouTube reading

by Ajahn Amaro. My question is, do you think Ajahn Chah is in this talk talking how he became enlightened?"

Well, I read that a long time ago when I was a monk. The this little story In the Dead of Night. And I looked on YouTube and there's lots of In the Dead of Night talks by Ajahn Chah.

Um I listened to one that wasn't by Ajahn Amaro. It was somewhat somebody at Abhayagiri.

Um

but uh it's mainly a story about Ajahn Chah

um spending the night in a cemetery in Thailand.

And just dealing with his fear because Thai people, Southeast Asian people in general, are very afraid of ghosts. A lot of them are.

And I mean, I I stayed in cemeteries sometimes in in Burma.

Went to see autopsies, that kind of a thing. It didn't bother me all that much. The autopsies mainly because I do have a degree in biology. It's just kind of a miracle how the human body works.

But, um

Um, it was part of I think the main point of it is Ajahn Chah is talking about one of his basic practices that he

would give to his disciples, like the monks that that came to him. It's like anything that you especially hate or fear or can't stand, go do that.

Like, uh, monks that um, they hated human companionship, you know, they just wanted to go alone in the forest, he'd make them go live in town. Or if they were afraid of being alone, he'd send them out alone.

Um, if they were afraid of ghosts, he'd send them to the cemetery, that kind of a thing. And it is a powerful practice to do what you hate or what you fear is very powerful practice. So, um

The question here, do you think Ajahn Chah is in this talk talking about how he became enlightened? Um, that really wasn't point of it. I don't think he would be telling people how he became enlightened. But, he is I mean, it might be. I mean, if he was enlightened, um, and I'm really not I don't really have a horse in this race. But, um if he became enlightened, then that would be part of how he became enlightened was just deliberately facing his fears.

And just the things that he he couldn't stand, he would just seek them out. Or if there's something that you really like, don't do it.

You know, like, uh

Neem Karoli Baba would say, you know, if you really crave that cup of tea, don't drink it.

So, that's that's the kind of practice that Ajahn Chah really emphasized for his disciples and for himself, also. So, if you did become enlightened, then he was talking about at least one way how he became enlightened, but that wasn't really the point. He was just pointing out the value, the spiritual value of avoiding what you like and seeking out what you dislike. Just for the just to teach yourself to to deal with it.

In a in a in a wise, mindful way.

So, I think I'll just, uh, move on to the next question. And this is from Rui.

And Rui says, "Which sequence is more scriptural, sila samadhi panna or panna samadhi sila? And of course, what's your direct experience of it?"

Well, the

the the scriptural tr- uh, trinity for monks especially is sila samadhi panna, which is morality, concentration, and wisdom.

For laypeople,

it's

um, at least tradi- in traditional

Theravada, it's

dana sila bhavana. Dana is generosity,

sila is morality again, and bhavana is like meditation or self-development.

Usually, I mean, it just means like development, but uh, usually it means meditation, like bhavana society.

So,

yeah, it's definitely sila samadhi panna, although, um

I mean, there's

it's not just a linear progression.

The the Theravada Buddhist commentaries

will will make it out as a linear uh,

progression, especially to the extent

that only when your sila is pure can

your samadhi be pure, and only when your

samadhi be when your samadhi is pure can

your panna be pure. So, in that sense,
it's just this linear progression. You
have to purify your morals so that you
become a

like a saint in more or less Christian
sense, and then only then

when your defilements are are like way
reduced, then you can get into very
high, uh, meditative states like jhana.

And then only from getting into these,
uh, advanced meditative states can you
develop uh, panna sufficiently to become
enlightened, according to this
traditional Theravada.

So, it's not panna samadhi sila, sila
samadhi panna.

And my direct experiences of

it,

that's that's kind of hard to say. I mean, you have to have a certain amount of panna just even want to, you know, keep precepts and meditate.

Unless you're just born born into it and you're just kind of following along with other people are telling you to do. I mean, that's possible, too. That usually does not end very well. I mean, you usually don't get much benefit from that.

Like, kids that would come to learn Buddhism just because their parents send them, they tend not to uh, make very good students. They don't they don't

learn very much just cuz they're not there because they're actually interested, they're just there because they got sent.

Um

So, it's I see it as to some degree a tripod, you know, the the the three the morality,

uh, concentration, and wisdom.

They're they're like a tripod and um, one of them is held up by the other two.

And it's just sort of a like a mutual feedback thing. They just gets better.

All three can get better and better kind of simultaneously.

But, um, it is it is good to start with

sila just because it's easier. It may not seem easy, but once you start trying to meditate, you'll find that controlling your body is easier than controlling your mind.

So,

so you you get like if you're a monk, you know, you get the rules down, you practice the rules relatively strictly, and then um

then you just the the peaceful, simple lifestyle,

you know, you're not having to worry about getting caught for anything cuz you're not doing anything wrong.

And then that causes your mind to be

more serene, and then meditation comes more easily, and then when meditation comes easily, then wisdom can arise.

Which, you know, it's not strictly a linear progression of sila samadhi panna, but, uh

it's probably best to list them in that order.

So, I think I'll just move on to the next question. This is from Stevens.

Who goes by other names, but we don't need to get into that.

Stevens says,

"So, I hear those nagas live in underwater pleasure domes in another dimension and just experience pleasure for some vast amount of time. I guess

the downside is that it's still samsara, but that sounds like a pretty good rebirth, right? How do you go about becoming a snake man in your next life? Not saying I'm going to resolve to do that, but, you know, could be fun, I suppose."

Well,

in, uh, Buddhism, there are beings called nagas.

And they are fire-breathing cobra dragons.

Um, I've got a theory about the origin of dragons, and I do think that it may have come from, uh, prehistoric Indian cobra worship.

And And I mean, it's understandable.

Like, a king cobra, they can be approximately 20 ft long. When they stand up on their hind legs, so to speak, they can be 6 ft high, which is taller than most people. They spread their their hood this wide, and if they bite you, you die.

So, yeah, it's understandable how primitive, you know, prehistoric people worship these things. And they're still worshipped by a few people even nowadays, like in, uh, India and, uh I'm not sure about Burma because if you're worshipping nagas as a kind of mythological being, it's not the same as actually worshipping snakes.

Because even by the Buddha's time, they, uh, could become very large. They had human intelligence approximately. They could shape-shift and assume human form. They breathed fire.

Which I think may have come from spitting cobras or something. They you know, they spit

Never mind.

So,

um, they are animals. They cannot become enlightened according to Theravada

Buddhist tradition. That's one reason

why, um, at a

at a monk's ordination ceremony,

the one of the questions that is asked

of any, um, aspirant to becoming a monk is, "Are you human?"

And, uh, the reason for that, according to the the rules of monastic discipline, is that one of these nagas assumed human form and was ordained as a monk.

And the thing is, when they when they fall asleep, when they're unconscious, they they lose their shape-shifting form. They just revert back to their natural form. And so, one time a monk was walking by this naga's cabin while the while the naga was asleep, and there just these huge scaly coils just hanging out the windows cuz they were so big it was so big. And, um, so he he went running to the Buddha,

and, uh

said, "No, you really can't be a monk.

It's, um, you're an animal, technically,
and you can't become enlightened. So,
sorry."

Um, they have nagas in Hindu mythology,
also, and they are the the enemies of
the garudas.

And so, I mean, it's not Maybe that's
one reason why they live under the ocean
is cuz there's these giant bird people
called the garudas. I think Vishnu rides
on one or something. Not sure about
that. But, I mean, they'll they'll prey
on nagas. So, nagas are not um the apex
predator in this uh Buddhist

mythological cosmos.

Um

I think I mean, if if you want to
get like a pleasurable rebirth, I think
you'd probably probably better off going
for deva status

than uh

snake man status or naga status. Partly
because their their capacity capacity
for wisdom, even though they have
approximately human intelligence
functionally,

their their spiritual

wisdom is stunted. I mean, they're
they're they're they're very limited
with regard to their capacity for
um spiritual progress.

Devas, on the other hand, have the capacity. They just usually don't go for it cuz everything's so nice, you know, they got the celestial mansions and the golden palaces and the pleasure gardens and the you know, all the all the rest of it.

But, um still I think you'd be better off moving upwards into the the deva realm than

arguably downwards into the animal realm. Although, um

some people would put the nagas at the level just above the human level at the the the realm of the four great kings.

Where you've got terrestrial small g
gods and so forth.

But, how do you go about becoming a
snake man or a naga in your next life?

I think probably the best thing you
could do is just um

kind of aspire to it, you know.

Just uh make some kind of

determinations, do acts of merit, and

dedicate that merit to may I become a

naga in my next life, something like

that. Although, again, I wouldn't really
advise it.

Um you might want to read up on

qualities of nagas, like psychological

qualities and so forth, and try to

cultivate that. But, again,

better off trying to to go for the deva realms.

So, we'll just move on to the next question. And this is from Chris.

How much should the mind be allowed to wander off?

Well, ideally, not at all.

Or

one step shy of ideally,

uh as soon as it starts to wander, you catch it.

But, it's cuz if you just keep letting it wander around, you're not really meditating anymore. I mean, if you're not meditating, then doesn't matter, I suppose. Unless I mean, you're doing

something important, you know, you're driving a car or something. You don't want to be just lost in daydreams.

But, let's say you're meditating, then you want to watch your mind as well as you can.

And even if you're being mindful, some people say like if you're practicing like samatha meditation, where you're just trying to keep your mind laser focused on one object, then of course, your mind's not supposed to wander at all. But, with mindfulness meditation, it's okay to let it wander if you observe it wandering. But, my experience is if um you're having a

thought, and then you mindfully note the thought, that just poofs the thought out of existence.

Unless it's music. For some reason, maybe music's in a different lobe of the brain. The noting mind and the thinking mind might be the same area in the brain, just going with materialistic science. So, that you can't have both the same time. So, noting it makes it stop. Whereas music, you can keep noting it and noting it. It's might be a song you hate that's just stuck in your mind, and you're just stuck with it until it runs its course or something.

So,

how much should the mind be allowed to wander off? If you're meditating, just keep it to a bare minimum. As soon as you notice it, just return to the primary object.

Um

at other times, uh well, that's that's uh personal choice, I suppose.

So, I'll just move on to the next question. This is a nice one. I like this one.

This is from Outer Haven.

And Outer Haven says,

"How did the venerable Panyo Bahasa become the dankest Buddhist on the interwebs?"

So, this

this might be the same person who said
this before, or it could be the second
second person. One person left a comment
Panyo Bahasa is the dankest meme.

So, I I really don't think so. I still
think Hitler is the dankest meme.

Maybe Trump after that.

But, um

how did Just assume that I'm a dank
Buddhist, and not necessarily dankest on
the interwebs.

Um

I'm not sure how it happened. It's uh

I was uh

I'm I've been a relatively independent
thinker. So, I'm not just slavishly

following along with, you know,
whatever the tradition says or whatever
the teacher says. I've always kind of
rebelled against that sort of thing. I
didn't follow I lived in Buddha on Burma
for more than 20 years.

Never had any interest at all in
following along with Burmese tradition.
Like, I wouldn't bow to statues usually.
You know, all the other Burmese monks
would be bowing. Sometimes Western monks
would be bowing. I just kind of look at
them cuz it it just didn't make any
sense to bow to a statue.

Uh so,

I've always kind of been critical and uh
um just kind of

called them as I see them. And then I came back to America, where I just, you know, the whole culture is just kind of going insane, mainly because of the left, I have to admit.

And uh yeah, I just just started calling it out. And

also, I have an interest in like my Indo-European ancestry, which is just totally taboo. You know, I mean, white people aren't supposed to have any interest or much less pride in their ancestry. I mean, if you're going to think about your ancestry at all, it should be like shame and remorse, you know, from the from the leftist

point of view.

But, I think the Indo-Europeans, they've got

at least as much to be interested in and even proud of than any other ethnicity on the planet.

So, I've been interested in that since before I became a monk.

I guess uh my dad being kind of a a macho guy who taught me to, you know, just live out in the woods and stuff. You know, I'm just we'd go camping without tents and and stuff like that, just sleep under the sky.

That might have helped some degree.

So, let's see. Dankest Buddhist.

I don't know. Maybe my sense of humor. I

do have one. I do have kind of a sense of humor.

But, it's not that I'm really all that outrageous. I think it's mostly that most

Buddhist monks are just uh I mean, I I mean no offense, and I'm not trying to insult anybody, but uh they tend to be rather

boring,

to tell you the truth.

Um it's like if you're trying to like extinguish your concept of selfhood and

and so forth. I don't know. I just it's

It's not all monks are like this. And

I'm really not trying to criticize them,
but um

a lot of people that are just they don't
have much personality to begin with.

You know, they're just drawn into sort
of merging into voidness or something.

And there's just a lot of

um conformists, too, especially the

Asian ones. They're just very conformist
in in in many respects.

So, I'm not really conformist in uh

I do have some uh

critical thought capacity and so forth.

So, that's probably probably helped,
anyway.

And uh I think a lot of Buddhists that
have uh exposure in the West are like

missionaries, you know, they're in the West trying to teach Dharma. And so, they're making a special effort not to step on any toes, not to ruffle any feathers, you know, not to melt any snowflakes, that kind of a thing. And so, they just tone it way down. They're all diplomatic. And I've just never had much use for that, either. So, that's probably that's probably a a big one right there. I I wasn't ever really interested in uh um pretending to be something I am not for the sake of getting more support, which is one reason why I was living from hand to mouth as a monk in the West

when uh relying on Western people to support me.

Um and I'm not complaining, either. I'm not complaining about people that supported me. They're very generous and very good people.

But, um

yeah, it's I'm an acquired taste or something. I don't know what it is.

So, we'll just move on to the next question.

And that is from Raffi 46.

And Raffi 46 says, "Is it permissible to donate organs after death to help curing sick people?"

And I assume he means from a Buddhist point of view. Or is it, you know,

wholesome,

meritorious karma or something?

And it could be. I mean, if it your

karma depends on your volition,

your like your will. And so, I mean, if

you've got like the the volition

to help people, then sure. Yeah, you can

get good karma for that. Although, I did

hear a story from somebody who was He's

He's into like

um Hindu yoga and Ayurveda and that kind

of a thing. He's really He's really the

Swami type. He lives in California. I

met him once. I've heard a lot about

him, too.

And um

he had some kind of attack. He was like
apparently comatose

and um

it was like a heart attack or something.

I'm not sure exactly what the problem
was. He had some kind of attack and he
was apparently like in a coma or
unconscious.

And he was taken to the hospital, but
because of his his practice of of yoga
and meditation and so forth, he was
still aware of what was going on and
what people were saying.

You know, he was

his I don't know, Hindu Hindu swamis can
do this kind of stuff.

And so there was a nurse saying that

they should try I mean she was suggesting ways of reviving him. The doctors is the doctor there was just resisting it because he was keen on just getting the getting the organs out while they were still warm essentially.

And um

it was just this back and forth between this increasingly upset nurse trying to trying to to help this guy and the doctor who was written apparently more interested in you know, the 50,000 bucks you can get for a new kidney.

And so

after hearing that story, I mean I would I would hesitate. I have not

volunteered. I I did like on my driver's license when I was in my 20s, but ever since that hearing that story where apparently it is a kind of racket where um

you know, you get a lot of money for for these organs and so somebody's pretty far gone, you know, they think well, you know, they're not going to get better. Let's just take out this heart.

Um

so you that's something you'd want to consider. I think your odds of uh being written off as a lost cause would be increased if you have an organ donor card.

Um at least marginally at least to a

small degree statistically.

So but nevertheless, I mean the desire to help others, you know, to save lives and that kind of thing is uh it's good karma.

So

you might get good karma. You can go to heaven after they refuse to revive you cuz they need your kidneys for someone else.

So I'll just move on to the next question.

And this is from Hey It's Teeg.

And Hey It's Teeg says

"What role does faith play in original or Theravada Buddhism? Lord Chalmers'

translation of the Sutta Nipata has the word saddha translated as faith. For example, in book one Sutta 10, the Buddha says, 'Faith forms a man's chief wealth. The doctrine leads to weal. The sweetest taste is truth. A life of wisdom's best.'

I think that in accordance with that is taught in the Atiga Vagga.

I think in accordance with that is taught in the Atiga Vagga and subsequently in Nagarjuna's

Mūlamadhyamakakārikā,

faith wouldn't really play a substantial role in Buddhism.

This would be because an aspirant clinging to no views and theories would

likewise cling to no beliefs. Since faith is naturally based on beliefs, I don't see how it would fit into the middle way. Is saddha mistranslated as faith or is faith taught as sort of temporary

sort of a temporary tool an aspirant can use, but in the end must like go up. For example, I have faith that the couch I am sitting on will support me, but I am not attached to the idea that the couch or the support it brings is a permanent self-existing entity.

Well,

getting back to the word saddha in Pali

it usually is translated as faith.

Although there are some translators um
like Western monk translators who don't
like the word faith

and because it has sort of Christian
connotations, you want to interpret
Buddhist faith along the the lines of
Christian faith, which is like believing
in this story that you can't possibly
prove

um till maybe after you die, maybe.

So they prefer a word like confidence.

Um

yeah, it it is kind of ambiguous. Like
there are at least

two passages I can think of. One in the
Sutta Nipata and one in the Dhammapada

that says a monk should have no saddha.
Which in that case it would just mean,
you know, believing in a story, but um
having confidence in in what you're
practicing, you know, just believing
that you're going to get benefit from
practicing it. I mean that's for a for a
beginner, you need some kind of faith.
And then as your wisdom increases, your
faith is going to become more subtle and
refined until finally it'll probably get
to the level of like what St. John of
the Cross was calling dark faith where
it's a kind of
confidence
that really doesn't have any

intellectual content. It's not even really an emotional thing. St. John of the Cross when he's talking about dark faith, he's he's talking about you get into a really deep mystical state where your mind has just stopped thinking. You know, your mind is just silent. You've you've dismissed from your mind everything that isn't God. So you can't know God intellectually, so the intellect is out. You can't perceive God, so perception is out. Just like you can't feel God emotionally, so so that's out. Just everything you can just get dismiss all your mental states. And then your mind is just empty, but still there's something there.

And I mean you're not just totally unconscious. It's not just this black void. There's still

I mean in a way you're more conscious than before.

And to a Christian mystic, I mean that's the spirit of God that's pervading everything, you know.

And um that he called that dark faith when you get to that state

where I mean you just

know from your experience

you know, that that it's there, that

there's more to life than just this

you know, samsaric stuff going on. That

there's something underlying that.

And um

yeah, it could be that that's what faith eventually becomes if if you just don't say that.

Like a fully enlightened being has no faith anymore. Then he doesn't need it. So it could be like a useful tool for a beginner and then gradually it fades out or becomes more refined or some such. But again

um

confidence is a word that is preferred by some translators and it and it it does avoid the the whole uh confusion with Chris Christian faith

in which you I mean you are pretty much compelled or or um

Muslim faith too where you are pretty much required to believe this elaborate story.

Um including the belief that if you don't believe it, you'll burn in hell forever.

That's that's that's weird. It's like reading the Quran or the Book of Mormon, too.

Um you're reading all these weird stories that are very hard to uh take at face value and just repeatedly as a refrain. Like if you don't believe this, you're going to burn in hell forever and

ever. If you don't believe this, you're going to burn in hell forever and ever.

Which uh kind of

scares people into believing it. Just just to be safe, I guess.

But Buddhist faith isn't like that. It's just you know, you believe that if you practice, you're going to get benefits, you know, you you you have faith that the Buddha was wise.

You know, that he knew better than you do how to become enlightened, that enlightenment is even possible. That kind of a thing. I mean that especially for a beginner, that would involve a certain amount of faith which

is, you know, believing something that you don't really know yet.

So let's see.

I think I'll just move on to the next question, which is also the last question.

And this is from Aerain.

And Aerain says

"What Buddhist traditions align with the Western tradition of festivals like Halloween around the the month of October?"

Well, we are in the month of October at the at the time of making this.

We're in October.

And

first of all

in Buddhism, they really don't put much emphasis on solstices and equinoxes that I'm aware of.

It was more seasonal. Like the big deals in Buddhism were full moons and also there was

the uh three months of the rains retreat.

The the the monsoon season. The first usually the first three months of the monsoon season. Although

um sometimes a monk could could uh select the the second three months of the of the monsoon season. It's it's four months.

So it's like

usually by default monks will stay in
one place

during the first three months of the
monsoon season, but you can skip the
first month and just do the the last
three and that still counts.

But um

that would end usually the first three
months of the monsoon season end in like
the full moon of October.

So that would be kind of close, you
know, sort of like the end of Buddhist
Lent.

Uh a certain amount of partying goes on
after the

the the end of the rains retreat for lay

people. Like in Burma, people generally
um refrain from getting married or
having like wild festivals like like
partying kind of festivals with like you
know,
uh inappropriate behavior maybe.

Um

until the the rain's retreat is over.

So, it's sort of like Christian Lent.

It's like a supposedly a

a holier time of year or something.

So, I mean, that might be close, but

the the whole

the whole seasons of like harvest time

um that we have in the West with like

Europe and and

like North America is just not the same

in in

Southeast Asia or in ancient India.

So,

yeah, I that would be about as close,

but they don't really have much of an

idea of something like Halloween or

just the whole the festivals um that are

roughly

uh in tune with um like the

solstices and equinoxes and that sort of

thing.

So,

yeah, there may be some some festivals

and stuff in Burma that I just never

heard of or there is one

that's it's kind of a an outlier.

I can't remember.

It's it's a it's a an annual festival in
Burma celebrating these two brothers and
they were

um you're supposed to offer rabbits to
them and there's uh a lot of partying
and and and drinking and stuff going on.

It was sort of it's sort of like

like an anti-Buddhist

uh holdover from pre-Buddhist paganism
in in Burma.

Something like that.

I think that was like in September,
August or September.

But, uh yeah, there's it's just uh very
different. The Buddhist traditions um
I'm not sure like if there were like

really archaic Indo-European traditions
that got incorporated into ancient
Indian Buddhism that then kind of
remained up until modern times. I'm not
I don't know what it would be.

So,

it's just uh mainly in Buddhism it's
it's full moons and uh the rain's
retreat are the are the big deals.

And uh

I think in Buddhism he really played
down the whole like religious
um like

religious traditions in general.

Um

yeah, it's he was he was kind of a

radical in that respect.

But, um

yeah, this this was a difficult question.

I don't know how to answer it very well just cuz there's it it it's almost like apples to oranges, you know, Western uh like Christian tradition and the the pre-Christian pagan re- things that kind of get turned into, you know, Halloween and Midsummer Night and and that kind of thing.

Um

yeah, I'm unaware of it in Buddhism.

Although, there there may be some vestiges of that, but uh it's it's not obvious at all.

And that is the last question.

So, we are done with another one.

And uh it's more than an hour, which is kind of surprising.

So, if you have any questions, you're welcome to ask anything you think I might be able to answer.

Uh especially questions about Theravada Buddhism, or Burmese Buddhism, or monasticism, or the history of early Buddhism, or

I mean, anything personally you think I might be able to answer that is not too embarrassing.

Um

and uh just leave them in the comments

below, or if you have access to the
Discord server, you can leave them
there, or if you have access to my
SubscribeStar channel, you can leave
them there.

And uh check the links below for all of
the links, and um
be happy.

hello and welcome to episode 36 of
question and answer I am your host panio
Basa

and I'd like to make a little disclaimer
before I start in on these questions

this veritable Cornucopia of questions

um my my consciousness

expands and contracts like the Buddhist

Cosmos although at a much higher rate

it doesn't take zillions of years for

this to happen and

um I it just happens naturally I mean it

doesn't necessarily have to be any

obvious external cause for it and right

now I'm in a kind of a contracted phase

it may be partly just because of the

dark wintry weather that has started recently or something I don't know but I'm going to do the best I can my general intelligence Remains the Same it's just that I won't be as spunky and perky you know I won't be frolicking in my seat as much as usual also uh for various uh mysterious and Arcane reasons I skipped a week and so it turns out we've got lots of questions we've got the veritable cornucopia and so I should start answering questions and um if if I'm like two verbose you know it's like I'm drawing out the questions taking too long just like wave your arms at the

screen and maybe it'll help
so the first question
is from Chakra Gosha who has changed his
name again I don't remember the new name
but this is the name that he was going
by when he asked the question
I almost knocked something off the desk
by waving my arms
so chakra Gosha says
do you think there is a fundamental
difference between theravada Buddhist
ethics and Mahayana Buddhist ethics
mahayanas sometimes portrayed taravada
as self-centered and uncaring about
others contrasting with the mahayanas
dedication to liberate all beings

however

I'm never sure to what extent this is
just a hostile caricature of terravada

do you think it's true that
compassionate empathy are less
emphasized in taravana ethics

well yeah there are differences I think
there's more similarities and

differences between taravala and

Mahayana since Mahayana is just a

further development of schools that were
similar to taravana

and I mean you go far enough back I mean

it all arises from the same root but

yeah there are differences I mean like

Mahayana has this weird illogical

dedication to saving all beings that

according to most Mahayana philosophy
don't exist that these beings are
ultimately empty or void
which doesn't necessarily mean just
blank nothingness but we we need to get
into that because that's not what chakra
Gosha was asking about
so you've got mahayanas
emphasizing compassion and vowing to
postpone enlightenment
uh for the sake of liberating all beings
that ultimately don't exist from the
terrible Autumn point of view you
liberate all beings by liberating
yourself
but um

let's see so I mean in a way that's like
the main

ethical difference at least with regard
to practice between taravada and

Mahayana is theravada is dedicated to
becoming enlightened in this life which
may require some apparent selfishness
where you're just going off and doing
your own thing because Solitude works
better for striving for enlightenment
for

ancient Indians anyway

whereas the mahayanists are doing
essentially the opposite of what the
Buddha was teaching in the earliest
texts and postponing Enlightenment
indefinitely until an infinite number of

beings are liberated and just going with logic I mean this universe has already been here for an infinite length of time and there are still apparently an infinite number of suffering beings so I mean if an Infinity of time has already passed and there's still an infinitude of suffering beings there's always going to be an infinitude of suffering beings seems to me um it is true that mahayanas can get kind of snarky and make fun of the Tariff audons all the terravans if you read the text they did the same thing for non-butist philosophers just made them look like like there was the six

heretical teachers the heretical
teachers

that uh I mean in the in the text

they're portrayed as pretty much like

The Three Stooges Laurel and Hardy plus
Gilligan

so

yeah I mean terravonna can seem selfish

like for example like a classic case

I've mentioned this before is that I

mean a monk can sit on the bank of a

river and watch a pretty girl drown just

because he doesn't want to break the

rule by touching a pretty girl

and that's that's pretty selfish I mean

if if it were me I'd just take the hit

rescue the pretty girl and uh and who

knows you might even have to do
mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or
something but you just do the Penance
afterwards

and you know it's it's good and you're
probably earning Merit by saving
somebody's life anyway although again
monks aren't supposed to earn Merit
Merit is for Lay people you know good
and bad are both

um they're both Karma and you're
supposed to be getting rid of all of
your karma or at least transcending all
of your karma you're not supposed to be
making new Karma any more than is
necessary

so

yeah I'd say with regard to the oh the
fundamental difference I think the only
real fundamental difference between
Buddhist ethics and Mahayana are
terrible Buddhist ethics and Mahayana
Buddhist ethics is that theravada
Buddhist ethics say you should strive to
become enlightened In This Very life
whereas the mahayanas are saying nope
just postpone it indefinitely
and um yeah I think that would be the
real like the radical difference and the
rest is just a matter of emphasis you
know terravada emphasizes compassion the
Buddha was

um

I'm motivated by compassion to to teach
the dhamma it's a new company is the
verb to feel compassion

sounds like I think literally means
something like shaking after or
trembling after you know it's like
concern you're trembling with concern
for the welfare of all beings or some
such

but

um I'm starting to be verbose we've got
lots of questions and so I'll just move
on to the next question which is by jazz
and I believe jazz is uh staying at a
monastery in Asia right now
so good for him and Jazz asks how did

you deal with foot warts and other
injuries to your feet while a monk and
then in parentheses he's got red ants
bugs Etc

um I never I never had foot warts I
don't know I think it might be a
a genetic thing or something I don't
know I've heard of people that get
really painful plantar warts but I never
never had a wart on my foot that I that
I can remember

but I went Barefoot for him

30 years like during the 30 years that I
was a monk up until the very end where I
was staying at this Monastery in
California that had like these little
pointy Burrs or little pointy seeds like

spiky Little Seeds everywhere so I had to wear shoes whenever I was walking around there

uh at least Outdoors but um up until then I'd wear shoes on average about twice a year

and um at first I was living in a monastery called chelseindoya in uh Central Central Burma and it was called a forest Monastery but it was really like a desert Wasteland Monastery and it was just Jagged rocks everywhere and my first year there at least I would have at least two bloody toes at any time I was always stubbing my toes on rocks because I don't lift my feet very

high when I walk but

um I mean it's just like a baptism by
fire you know you just you just have to
learn to be careful and

um I remember when I was a kid my father
used to say that natives in Africa go
barefoot so much that the bottoms of
their their feet their soles of their
feet toughen up like shoe leather and I
just naturally assumed when I stopped
wearing shoes that my feet were going to
toughen up likewise and they did toughen
up a bit but it was nothing like shoe
leather and mainly you just learn the
instincts

of walking barefoot I think we probably
have a lot of latent instincts and

reflexes for walking barefoot because most of our ant human ancestors went Barefoot up until they uh migrated up into Northern climates I assume and so you just learn how to walk carefully you learn how to like if you're walking on rough ground you just learn to put the whole foot down you know like not going down heel first or toes first you just put the whole foot down until it's kind of distribute the pressure evenly and you just learn to always be looking down or looking down every few seconds just to make sure you're not going to step on anything

pointy or icky or bitey or stingy or
anything like that

and that's really all I did I mean you
get bitten by ants sometimes

um

but I mean that's rare

especially with regard to your feet

there's there's one kind of ant in Burma

it was it was it was a kind of swarming

ant almost like a little army ants

they're called maybe do in Burmese which

means ground hornets

and they just swarm I mean it was just

amazing sometimes and those kind of ants

as soon as they touch you they bite and

they're kind of like a bed bug they

don't search around looking for a good

place to bite it's just as soon as they
come in contact and they bite

but um there's other kinds of ants like
there's like a big orange ant called a
kajin in Burmese

and um they live up in trees a lot and
they make nests by kind of gluing the
leaves together into a football kind of
a thing and then get all the way up to
the back your neck before they start
biting but it's just a Pinchy bite they
don't inject any kind of formic acid or
anything like they uh the little ones do
so yeah it's like uh with footworks I
didn't deal with them at all because I
didn't have any but other injuries to my

feet I mean you can step on Thorns I
remember one time
um the same Monastery uh cheltsin doya
uh the the the the desert Wasteland
Monastery they had a lot of cacti and
acacia trees that had like big Wicked
Thorns like this and I stepped on one
when I was going for alms round in the
village about a mile and a half from the
monastery and it went way the heck up
inside my foot like at least an inch and
then broke off and I'm just like limping
home and I it stayed in my foot for
probably two weeks before finally one
day I was just trying to squeeze some
goop out and then pop out came this
little black remnant of the thorn

but um

this is what you what you do you just

deal with it

so I think I'll just move on to the next

question

and that is uh from lunar vibes

and lunar Vibes says you mentioned that

there is a branch of Buddhism being

developed that believes that there is an

individual self I'm very interested in

this because I have always interpreted

the doctrine of no self as no

self-consciousness for example in a Solo

violin player has to perform it is

important not to be aware of yourself so

you can give your best performance in

that moment I think we have all
experienced something like that in our
lives
um become become too aware of yourself
during an activity
and you mess up and will become too
aware of yourself during an activity and
you mess up still in my view there is an
individual Spirit performing so I would
definitely like to read or hear more
about this kind of Buddhism does this
branch of Buddhism have a name or could
you give me some names of writers
philosophers researchers supporting this
type of Buddhism well I'm I'm not sure
that there is any
branch of Buddhism

that endorses the idea of an individual self like an ultimately real individual self in ancient times there was a sect of Buddhism called the pudgalavadins and they taught that there was a pudgala which is like an individual an individual being but they couldn't say there was an Atta or Atman or a self because that was just I mean it was just Orthodox doctrine of Buddhism going back to very early times so they couldn't say there was a self they'd have to come up with some different word and kind of engage in a little careful sophistry to avoid being too unorthodox

and then they could say well there's a
pudgala and I don't even know if this
was ultimately real or not
but that that branch of Buddhism died
out and I don't think there's a whole
lot known about it but nevertheless I've
I've caught in Hell from uh some pure
land Buddhists some pure land Buddhists
especially Western ones just just
vehemently insist
that there is uh some kind of ultimately
real self although
it tends to be the case that these
individuals
real or not
um they're going for more of a new
Panasonic idea of self where it's just

like there's this pervasive Ultimate
Reality and the part of it that's
pervading us can be called our soul you
know our true Essence something along
those lines

but getting to like the violin player or
you know someone who's dancing or doing
anything really well

um you know yeah you can't be
self-conscious about it you can't be
like even driving a car you know you
can't be thinking about yeah now I
should turn this way I should shift or
or you know I should hit the brakes a
little more you know you just do it
without thinking about it and I assume

an enlightened being would be that way
pretty much all the time

so yeah it's like the idea of self it's
the idea of self that gets in your way
and um

yeah I mean that's that's in all

Buddhism so this self-consciousness
thing

um I mean that's true of of Buddhism I
mean it's in there but the no self is
more radical than that it's thought that
you're there's a real being that isn't
aware of itself

um you know like perceiving itself as a
self that really

um you know everything is just
interconnected

and you can't

postulate some discrete entity that is

separate from everything else

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from Athena's sigil

and this is uh I'm I've considered maybe

whether I shouldn't just uh just leave

this one out but

um

Athena sigil might want to know you know

so Athena sigil says one thing that I've

taken away from your videos is the

obvious Buddhist teachings and in

particular to the terravada

interpretation but I've also been

watching and reading about Burmese

culture in particular the temple complex
is strewn throughout Southeast Asia
it's utterly fascinating so much so that
I purchased numerous books on both the
teachings of the Buddha
pseudo translations and the ruins
architecture of the region
will you ever dedicate an episode or two
to the Temple's monasteries and other
holy sites of Burma or Myanmar
and that is a good idea so
um yeah I'll probably make an individual
video where I just sit here and talk
about not one topic of
um
the Temple of monasteries and you know
like uh pagodas

you know shrines that kind of thing of
of Burma I can't really speak of other
countries because I lived in Burma for
like 24 years and uh I lived in Thailand
for maybe three weeks
never been to Sri Lanka
so yeah that's something that's
something that I can almost sort of
promise that I'll do within the next two
weeks or so is make a video where I just
sit here and talk about you know like
Buddhist shrines and monuments and so
forth of uh of Burma kind of you know
historical manner
because I mean there were the mons in
the South and the pews in the kind of

the the west and then the the ethnic
Burmese came down and kind of conquered
the Northern Territory of the pews and
you know they all had their own Styles
and their own kind of thing that they
were doing

so yeah y'all thank you Athena sigil for
suggesting that it is a good idea for a
topic so I'll just move on to next
question this is from Mary spelled
m-e-r-r-y

and Mary says is there any way to lose
monk status other than by committing
parajika well you can drop out
that's one way of doing it now all you
have to do I mean it's not like you take
vows people people used to talk tell

ah they used to talk to me about you
know vowels you're breaking your vows or
something but monks really don't take
brute terravonna Buddhist monks really
don't take vows

so if you are ordained you're a monk but
all you have to do is just tell somebody
that you're not a monk anymore and mean
it

and they understand what you said and
that's it you're not a monk anymore but
I think Mary was talking about ways of
just getting booted out being
excommunicated and there's only one way
I know of I mean like
like the government even though they've

done it in like Thailand and Burma
technically they do not have the
authority to force you to stop being a
monk I think in Burma one of the things
that they would do is they would just uh
have the monk raped by a prostitute or
something and then that would be you
know he would be parajika he would have
if you have sex then that's it
but um there is one way it's it's I
think even most monks are unaware of
this but there's one other way of
of being like excommunicated where
you're no longer a monk anymore
and that is to lose your balls if you
lose your balls you know some horrible
accident then that's it a eunuch cannot

be a monk

I mean if somehow through like

Paranormal means all of a sudden poof

you go from male to female then you're a

bikuni I mean you're you're an ordained

nun but if there's any interval in

between where you're not male or female

in a you know completely male or female

that's it if you lose your balls and you

don't just instantaneously become a

woman then yeah you're you're out

with all due respects

so I'll just move on to the next

question who chose your poly name that

was my preceptor when you when a monk is

ordained or when a layperson is ordained

to become a monk he has to have a
preceptor who is like responsible for
making sure that he learns what he needs
to learn and so forth you know it's like
a teacher like a spiritual father kind
of and my spiritual father was uh an old
Burmese monk named blind at Seattle
uh I think his um his poly name was
Sanda Theory or chandasiri which means
like Moon Glory something like that
and uh he's the one who chose my name I
I really I would have called myself
something different than Pine obasa but
um before they named me they had to
first they asked me what day of the week
I was born on and I didn't know and in
Burma everyone knows but it turns out

that it's just Burmese tradition that the name like the first letter of your name depends upon what day of the week you were born so I was born on a Thursday and if you're born on a Thursday your name can start with p b or M

and so they went with Ponyo bossa um and then so later on when I'm in Burma someone would ask me what my monk name was and I'd say Ponyo Bossa or in Burmese pronunciation is and they'd say oh you're born on Thursday but uh that's maybe TMI so who chose my poly name was my preceptor who was an old Burmese monk

named uh plaintiff Seattle so I'll just
move on to Mary's next question

any thoughts on ajan WE Mala Ramsey he
is from some Burmese tradition he says
that some people are becoming

enlightened on his seven or ten day

Retreats I don't know dot not well he

wouldn't be ajan we malaromsi because he
is Burmese who would be like Seattle ooh
we malaromsi

and I'm pretty sure

he had a meditation center in Rangoon in
Burma and I'm pretty sure

he was a monk in the mahasi tradition so
he'd be teaching some variation of the
mahasi tradition

and I had a few people suggest that I go

there it is kind of like a
um not very well known but it is it it
does accept like International
um meditators and people who want to be
ordained as monks
and uh that's really about all I know
about it it's I'm pretty sure it's in
it's uh some variation of the mahasi
method
and with regard to people becoming
enlightened on a seven or ten day
Retreats yeah I don't know either
um I'd be even skeptical of
um even a high number of people becoming
like arya's you know below enlightened
in seven or ten day Retreats although

the uh mahasi method did it um like some
mahasi meditation centers did acquire a
kind of reputation for being sewed Upon
A factories just you know you got the
the meditators come in this this door
and then they come out you know a month
later as sodaponos out this other door
is just cranking out soda upon us and it
used to be you'd even get a certificate
like a soda put on a license you know a
like a diploma or something but um they
don't do that anymore and um I'm very
skeptical of any sort of any sort of
system that makes claims like that
so I'll just go on to Mary's next and
last question
and Mary says from cold Alaska to cold

Washington to blazing hot Central Burma
to hot California to South Carolina what
climate do you prefer the most do you
like snowy Frosty winter
well

um it's true that I was born in Alaska
although I moved from Alaska to
Washington state in the Pacific
Northwest like near the coast Grays
Harbor County
town of Aberdeen home to Kurt Cobain and
Nirvana and all that

um
and I just kind of grew up there it was
sort of where I was raised and you I
guess I just got acclimated to Pacific

Northwest weather and it used to be
and I think it may still be that my
favorite kind of weather is like
it's like completely overcast but it's
like white it's it's instead of like a
golden light from the sun it's more of a
silvery bright white and there's like a
coolness like a bracing coolness and
wetness in the air which is really
common in Aberdeen but
um not so common in like Central Burma
um

hot weather is fine I mean I can take
just about any kind of weather but hot
humid weather it does wipe me out pretty
bad and um so of course I'm moved to
South Carolina where the summers are

very hot and very Swampy

but it's I'm not complaining at all it's

uh it's very nice living in South

Carolina especially uh because it's uh

firmly a red State it's a it's a

conservative State like I voted last

Tuesday during the midterms and like at

least one third of the people running

were Republican incumbents running

without any opposition at all I mean the

Democrats just figured it was no point

to even trying

so yeah I mean blazing hot I don't like

freezing cold I don't like so much just

pouring down rain all the time I don't

like blazing sun with no rain I don't

like I just has a good Buddhist I just
followed the middle path

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from Sacha spelled

s-a-c-h-a

and sancha says what do you think of

non-duality and then in parentheses he's

got Eckhart Tolle Rupert Rupert Spiro or

Spira Francis Lucille Etc well I mean

I'm well acquainted with that cartola

I've seen a few of Rupert Spira

or Spiro spiras

um videos

and uh Francis Lucille I've never heard

of before

but non-duality I mean if I think of

non-duality I just go back to shankara

you know in in India like uh advice

downtown

and um

I think he's like the

the non-dualist par excellence

um and I think he was influenced by some

Mariana schools like majama especially I

think

but um

yeah I think that's that's that's

correct I I think I would be ultimately

a non-dualist I mean when you're dealing

in samsara the worldliness with books on

the shelf and everything then of course

you've got to be kind of a dualist you

know it's either the book you're looking

for or it isn't

but um

yeah I think that's I think non-duality

here it's it's I mean there's different

ways you can interpret non-duality like

non-duality and Duality sometimes just

means that you that mind and matter are

like just ultimately different from each

other that there's you know they're if

they're not one of them is not just

assuming the form of the other the

others like

um non-duality would be like Spinoza or

something or I don't know but um

what do I think of non-duality yeah I

think Ultimate Reality is non-dual

that there is an absolute that is just

beyond

um like human perception and Duality has
to be it's it's an artifact of human
perception

because human perception you it's like
namarupa where or uh punches sunka is
another another term in Pali where first
you know you concentrate and you
discriminate something and then you slap
some kind of meaning onto it and the
meaning might just be you know what is
that it's just it's some kind of a bat
that you don't know what it is but still
it's a that you know it's that thing or
whatever you know whatever that is
still you know you first you distinguish

that from the whole rest of your field
of view or your field of perception and
then you attribute some significance to
that

and that's just an artifact perception I
mean you can't really

um have distinctions without relations

you know like same as different from

bigger than smaller than all of that

kind of stuff and all of these relations

that that are necessary for you to

perceive anything distinct it's just an

artifact or perception that like a a

chemist can analyze some some kind of

matter some substance and he can

separate it out into his individual

components and he's not going to be able

to isolate pure same as or different
from because it's just not there it's in
it's in your mind
so yeah I think ultimate reality is
non-dual and it just transcends even The
Duality of is and isn't which is one
reason why Buddhism doesn't really talk
much about the ultimate and even
um like an ultimate personal Essence
like the the self
the Ultimate Reality I mean you can't
say that it does exist you can't say
that it doesn't exist you can't say that
it does and doesn't exist you can't say
that neither does nor doesn't exist
because it's completely Beyond

perception anything you can't stick
labels onto it just doesn't work it's
like trying to stick tape onto a
powdered donut it's just not gonna work
so we're going to Eckhart Tolle and so
forth I mean whether they're really
enlightened or not and that kind of
thing is it's not really the question
here apparently they're teaching some
kind of non-duality also
but I'll just go right back to vedanta
and uh

say yeah I I can agree with that
although still vedanta does stick a
label onto the absolute and call it
Brahman
and

even that is really kind of an error
so I kind of like the Buddhist
preference just I mean they've got the
idea of Nirvana but it's more of an
ethical State than a metaphysical state
and um they just kind of leave the
absolute alone they don't stick labels
as a general rule I mean because it just
doesn't work I mean anything it's it's
going to be different than you can
imagine

so we'll just move on to the next
question

this is from Outer Haven

what are your thoughts on David Cole the
notorious revisionist have you read any

of his books or seen his YouTube videos
well at the time that outer Haven asked
this question I had never heard of David
Cole before but I did look up a few of
his YouTube videos

um and I I read uh about him on
Wikipedia

and so

um yeah I mean he's entertaining my
girlfriends can't stand him and so I've
gotta watch his videos by stealth you
know when she's not around or something
but

he's he's funny I mean he's he's good at
telling stories and he's you know you
got some video he's going to talk about
the Holocaust or something in the first

30 minutes or just him talking about
some guy cutting his trees just this
funny I mean just complete digressions
so it's hard to get to the meat of what
he's saying maybe in his books you know
he just gets right to the to the point
but in his videos he's just all over the
place he is entertaining you know he's
funny

um but what little I know about his
revisionism

um I don't think he he denies the
Holocaust I think he's kind of along the
lines of like David Irving you know
there's maybe not even as as Extreme as
David Irving

certainly not as Extreme as in my my
buddy Brian Roo but I mean he's so he's
I think he just reduced the number from
six gorillion down to four gorillion or
something and you know it may be that
you know he says a lot of the same
things that a lot of other people like
revisionists are saying you know like
um was it dakal wasn't really a death
camp it was just a labor camp and the
the gas Chambers were
um most of the gas Chambers were
constructed by the the Soviets for for
like a uh concentration camp Museum in
Poland after you know Poland got
absorbed into the Soviet sphere of
influence and so forth

um

so yeah I think

um

I think he's pretty tame actually

but I mean if you deviate at all

from the the standard narrative that's

well established from you know right

after World War II and then uh you might

get uh

called uh you know denier or

um

you know you're peddling misinformation

or some such

so let's just move on to this question

here this is from Ricardo and Ricardo

says are you familiar with dojen zenji

so what are your thoughts on him

um when I was in college I was just taking an interest in Buddhism and starting to read books on the subject I read I don't remember the name of the book but it was by dogen and dogen was like a medieval Japanese

um he was the founder of Soto Zen I'm pretty sure in Japan

I think he went to Korea or something and and you know studied under some master there and then came back to Japan and founded the Soto Zen School

and at the time I was impressed I mean he seemed wise and knowledgeable but the only specific account that I can remember from reading that book which

again was like I was like 19 years old

so that was ancient times

is there's a story of a monk who was

like wanting to eat like raw meat and

drink raw blood and then I think it was

doget himself who walked into the room

while this monk was eating and he saw

there was some kind of little demon on

top of his head that was actually eating

the meat and drinking the blood

um so that's kind of interesting

but um yeah I'm that's really all like

that's all I can say about dogen is you

know he's

medieval Japanese and monk who uh

founded the sotos Zen School

and he did write at least one famous
book that I have read but it was so long
ago

that um

yeah I've forgotten almost all of it so
I'll just move on to the next question

here and this is from Alan

so Alan says what's the point in reason
for having a bicentennial flag or

whatever that American flag is in the
background what does a flag have to do

with Buddha or Buddhism what is the

Betsy Ross flag the flag We Now call The

Betsy Ross flag is the circle of 13

five-point Stars

in a blue patch on the top left corner

13 alternating red and white stripes cut

horizontally through the rest of the
claws the Continental Congress called
for such a flag on June 14
1777. I think this this flag this Betsy
Ross flag

um I think it comes from around the like
the War of 1812 or something
maybe not

maybe they already had more than 13
colonies or states by the War of 1812
but the thing is

I'm a patriotic American
and

um I just
if I feel more comfortable
getting an old flag that kind of

represents what America used to be like
rather than taking pride in what America
is becoming now

I like I like what the founding fathers
stood for what they represented I mean
slavery yeah as you were better off
without that but still I mean their idea
of you know governance by the people
which is I mean it's just off the rails
now

but I think it was a good idea and I'm a
patriotic American so I just got this
flag but we don't have a proper flagpole
and uh so my my sweetheart just kind of
folded it up there she thought it looked
nice there and I I think it does look
kind of nice there

and our next door neighbors they got a
Gadsden flag you know the the snake
they've got that just hanging from the
front of their house
this is South Carolina buddy boy and and
if I mean you take issue with of like an
American flag in this room I mean what
is that door knob there have to do with
Buddhism you know there's books on the
bookshelves that don't have much to do
with Buddhism if anything what does that
mirror have to do with Buddhism look at
my hand waving in the mirror there
what's that have to do with Buddhism I
mean it's not necessary
for everything in this room just because

I do videos here sometimes
to uh be Buddhist specifically
and I mean I would suggest to Alan here
I mean he's been kind of spamming my
comments

um like going back to old videos and
leaving comments about how I just I'm
too political and this and that but I
mean nobody's forcing you to watch it
that I'm aware of I mean if you really
disapprove then you're not required to
watch but I'm not going to uh just
talk only about Buddhism sometimes I do
but not always

so the next question is from lucid
and Lucid says
how much backlash do you and then

parentheses and Brian Rue get from other Buddhists because of your views have you ever been fired or forced to resign like he has

well

uh yeah Brian I mean he's just persecuted he's just kicked off every platform even Free Speech platforms will kick him off sometimes

and um

yeah he was like kicked out of uh like Buddhist groups and he lost his job

and um

yeah I mean it's really too bad I mean he's really a harmless person he's got some strange ideas but I mean he's he's

not advocating violence in any way he's
not advocating hatred in any way

so yeah Brian is uh
got some bad karma

I guess but uh as for me I mean I've
never been fired or forced to resign
like he has I mean My Views aren't as
Extreme as his

and I do try to be careful about what I
talk about on YouTube especially because
really it's very censorious

I mean you can you can get in trouble
for just telling the truth sometimes
so

but partly it was just I was a monk the
whole time if I hadn't become a monk
there is a good chance I would have

become like a university Professor like
now an unemployed University Professor
like

um you know I got a degree in biology
probably I would have continued with you
know ecology or something like that and
then as a biologist being required to
call male students

she

you know I might just you know and
yeah I'm just really not into that so
um

yeah I might have been fired or forced
to resign if I had not become a monk and
now I'm just living in you know redneck
land which is where I prefer to be

so yeah I think probably some of
possibly the the owner of the company
might be more of a uh a radical redneck
than than I am

bless his heart he's a good man

ah also a devout Christian there's a lot
of that in South Carolina also which is
really not so bad even though I'm not a
Christian

so yeah I think I answered your question
so I'll just move on to the next
question

this is kind of an easy one this is from
ofm

and ofm says

I don't know what ofm stands for ofm

says have you ever come across the book

Nirvana Sara by dafri John

and

I'm I yeah I've never read anything by
doffrey John I may have seen it at a
spiritual bookstore before

I just remember one time I was in
Bellingham Washington I think I was in
college at the time

and um I walked into the spiritual
bookstore in Bellingham Washington at
the time and he was still called Bubba
free John back then it just it just
struck me as just delightfully absurd
um I assume he's one of the people like
some of the people mentioned above like
a cartola and the Rupert Spira that are

kind of declared to be or declaring
themselves to be enlightened beings
but um yeah that's that's about all I
know about him he was kind of a
character kind of eccentric maybe uh
maybe a a con man maybe really he had
some kind of experience that you know
put him above the ordinary normally I
have no idea

so I'll just move on to the next
question because yeah people sometimes
people ask him you know what's what's
your opinion of my aunt Mabel or
something is

you know I I I've never heard of him I
don't know

I'm sure Aunt Mabel's very nice I'm not

trying to criticize your aunt Mabel

so this next one is from maitrea Buddha

which is I'm I'm honored that maitreya

Buddha would ask questions on this on

this show

and maitreya Buddhist says

why are Buddhists against astrology when

the Buddha's mother consulted with an

astrologist that predicted Siddhartha

would either become a great king Emperor

or a great spiritual teacher that's why

siddhartha's father did his best to keep

Siddhartha in the palace so that he

would be a great king Emperor well I

really don't want to correct maitrey of

Buddha you know I mean that's kind of

sacrilege or something but actually it
wasn't astrology it wasn't an astrologer
uh maybe he wasn't astrologer but he
wasn't practicing astrology when he was
looking over the the baby gotima
um it was the marks on his body
which is not astrological so he he
examined the marks on the baby's body
and then he started crying which
frightened the parents so they're asking
what's wrong and he's oh no there's
nothing wrong he's just going to become
either the the king of the world or else
he's going to become a fully enlightened
Buddha and I'm not going to live long
enough to see it happen that's why he's
crying

so

um Buddhists are against astrology well

I mean if you go to Thailand or Burma

probably Sri Lanka too there's

astrologists everywhere so the average

person is very much into astrology

there's lots and lots of astrology in

Buddhist countries but Buddhist monks

aren't supposed to be practicing it

they're not supposed to be giving it any

attention because it's

um in Burmese palis tirasana waza or

animal knowledge you know it's just

irrelevant to enlightenment so I mean

even practicing herbal medicine that

kind of thing is out Consulting girls in

trance at a seance is is another one
you're not supposed to do that you're
not supposed to be playing board games
you know I mean you're just supposed to
be just single-mindedly practicing
towards Enlightenment according to the
texts

so I mean that's what that's all about
and uh the next question from maitreya
Buddha is is Buddhism nihilistic and
this I get it

so many people say say that you know
taravana Buddhists are nihilists they're
nihilists because they they say that
there is no self and I've already gone
over this it's in the text themselves
there's two Extremes in in the sutas

it's it's

this is mentioned numerous times you

know there's sasita deity or the view of

eternalism like after you die you have

the spirit that exists you know

eternally and then you've got uh uchida

Vana you know like the uchidovadis

or ochita DT which means it means

cutting off which means when you're dead

you're dead and these are extremes this

this when you're dead you're dead this

uchida diti is is nihilism it's it's

it's called nihilism

well you they're after death you're just

annihilated

although it could be that nihilism could

also or nihilism some people say
nihilism that it's uh it's that nothing
is real
and that is I mean you're getting into
tricky territory there because again
Buddhism doesn't deny that there's an
ultimate reality it's just that they
don't try to reify it because it's just
totally off the scale it's non-dualistic
so I would say Buddhism isn't nihilistic
that nihilism is one extreme eternalism
is the Other Extreme and Buddhism
follows the middle path which relies
upon dependent origination dependent
co-origination
where everything is conditional and
virtual and in a way it's real but it's

not real in and of itself it's real only
in the context of everything around it
so it's it's not really nihilistic
although people especially Western
Buddhists of A Sort or Western Buddhist
authorities of A Sort who just
vehemently insist that we've got an
eternal soul
they'll call anyone who denies that
a nihilist although they themselves have
got the extreme View
so I'll just move on to the next
question
and this is from Stevens
and Stephen says somebody asked me
whether or not reincarnation happens in

some sort of linear time sequence or if you can get reincarnated at various times out of sequence like one time I got reincarnated in the Middle Ages then the next time I got reincarnated 100 years from now then the next time I get reincarnated as the caveman or a dinosaur or something Etc

well my father had that view actually he considered himself to be a a Buddhist but uh his his Buddhism was pretty sketchy he learned most of what he knew about Buddhism I'm pretty sure from a dead Vietnamese monk being channeled through uh spirit medium and uh yeah his understanding of Buddhism was pretty sketchy from from my

my point of view but um if you go with
this Orthodox terravonna Orthodox
taravada is it says that really the past
doesn't exist the future doesn't exist
all that exists is now sort of like
Eckhart Tolle with the power of now all
you have is now
and so that couldn't work in with in
with in accordance with orthodox
teravana
that it would have to be
um this in a linear sequence because
um taravada has more or less of a
Newtonian understanding of space and
time
um although I mean if you set aside

Orthodoxy you know you try to be a free
thinker and all that then it's
theoretically possible I suppose
although it's kind of weird to think
that you know your last life when you
became enlightened was like 2 000 years
ago
and you you're still just
struggling and floundering
so yeah it's it's kind of kind of tricky
um it's hard to say
but from the Orthodox point of view the
answer is that this would be impossible
because time is sort of Newtonian and
only the present exists and and it's
kind of moving
you know forwards into the future and

all that

so it would have to be in a linear

sequence going with Orthodoxy but I'm

not particularly Orthodox and I'm

open-minded on the subject I don't know

how it could work that way but

lots of things I mean I don't I don't

know how computer chips work either but

they work so there you are so I'll just

move on to the next question this is

from shrumo

and trumo says have you met someone you

thought might be an aura hunt was there

anything that stood out to you about

them well I've met a few people that had

reputations for being our Hans although

that doesn't mean very much in in a
Buddhist country I mean some parts of
Burma I was considered being a hunt or
there was this one or a hunt or this one
monk I should say we someone was really
keen on taking me to see this Monk
and uh he's talking about how he was uh
an aura hunt and I said are you sure and
he's yep yep I'm sure he's in our hunt
all right
and we get there and it was like a
circus I mean it was like
uh I mean just crowds of people and you
got the weird The Alchemist guy with the
white white suit and the the beads and
everything the long beard and they're
just building pagodas and stuff all over

the place statues everywhere and this
monk came out

and I mean it was it was like 11 45 in
the morning before he started eating and
I mean he's among supposed to stop
eating at 12. one of the first things he
did he comes out and sits under this
Pavilion he blows his nose in his hand
and just wipes the snot on the wall
so yeah I mean just because someone's
considered to be an aura hunt I mean
they're not necessarily in our hunt but
um possibly the most advanced monk that
I have met was shwayum in Seattle I met
him once
and he was the teacher of the famous

utejaniya who is the leader of
schweigumin meditation center in Rangoon
although

um really does not have a very high
reputation outside of or inside of Burma
outside you know he's all the rage he's
in fashion and all that but in Burma
itself people really do not have a very
high opinion of him because he's just
kind of uh

um kind of a

he's not a scholar

and in Burma I mean to know the text
backwards and forwards is considered to
be you know a sign of being really
literate and all that and I don't think
he was nearly as advanced as his teacher

menciano but I met William in Seattle
once and he was maybe 90 years old at
the time

and he was with another Monk who I think
was around the same age and said I mean
he's just I mean he's just right wide
awake I mean he was he was sharp as
attack still and this other monk sitting
next to him I mean you had people had to
yell into his ear in order for him to
hear anything and still they're not sure
if he heard or not I mean he was just
kind of you know he was definitely in
severe decline

but I'm in Seattle he was just very I
mean there wasn't he wasn't teaching me

secrets of the universe or anything I
just happened to meet him we just
happened to be at the same place at the
same time and uh he just seemed very
calm very alert just very just right
there you know

and uh I've met other monks who who said
that uh of the monks that were alive at
that time in Seattle's had the
reputation for abuse being you know the
most you know like the likeliest BET of
one who had really attained something
really advanced

before that was way boost Seattle he was
considered by some people to be in Aura
hunt but he died before my time
so that would that would be my guess I

mean

um

so he might be in our hunt it would be
shui room in Seattle but he's he's not
alive anymore now of the of the people
who are alive today I really couldn't
say

so I'll just move on to shrumo's next
question is Burma a good place to go for
ordination I've been warned by friends
about the political situation going on
there he said that there are terrorists
there that Target the monks well there
may be insurgents there who Target
foreigners just to kidnap them and sell
them for ransom but that would be in

Insurgent zones and those are mostly off limits anyway so if you're going to be going

um a western is going to go to Burma to be ordained as a monk he's pretty much going to be limited to you know safe areas and forbidden to go anywhere else I a few times I just decided I was just gonna go to a brown Zone which is sort of a borderline area between Insurgent zones which are black zones and the white zones that are safe

and uh yeah it's like that you get chased down by the secret police or the immigration authorities and they'll uh you know they'll send you back to Rangoon or whatever

so I like I say I lived in Burma for 24 years and um there were times when there were protests and then you know soldiers shooting protesters and all that and you know it's localized you know it's not completely Universal across the country and most westerners who go to Burma to be ordained as monks

they go to like International meditation centers in Rangoon or closely associated with places in Rangoon that are safe you know nothing dangerous happens there as a general rule

so when you hear all this stuff about the political situation a lot of it's propaganda I mean there's this little

old Burmese lady who bless her heart
she's uh hasn't given up on me even
though I'm not a monk anymore and she
she writes to me sometimes and
um you know she's saying that you know
there's there's places where villages
are just depopulated and you know
soldiers really are just shooting people
in the streets and so forth
but um

I assume that would be very localized
and uh

I think the terrorists

um

as a general rule they'd probably be on
your side

I don't know why why I would think that

it's like um

I don't know I mean Americans or

westerners you know they were kind of

seen as

um

kind of not a possibility that things

will get better in Burma although they

don't necessarily get better even I mean

as soon as Burma became more liberalized

and opened its doors to the West you

know immediately you've got like the uh

the the charitable organizations and

just feminists and stuff just swarming

into the country and just trying to turn

Burma into some [—] up Western

liberal Society with decadence and you

know chicks and miniskirts and orange hair and all that I think it's better just staying traditional in a way um a bad military government it's saving Burma spiritually by keeping out the McDonald's is in the Walmarts and the the uppity feminists and so forth really I mean it's like

um a lot of I I didn't really start interacting with Western expats in Burma until around 2012.

and

and it's sort of like colonialism all over again you know it's like I I met the uh the leader or the director of save the children in Burma and he's living like in a mansion with like a

swimming pool and a tennis court and
that service I mean it's like how much
of the money that you donate to these
charitable organizations just gets
siphoned off into these these guys who
they don't speak Burmese and they don't
associate with Burmese people other than
servants as a general rule unless
they're just really westernized Burmese
people

maybe rich or something

and uh and then the women you know the
board housewives are like starting up
feminist organizations and you're trying
to teach the the relatively content
women of Burma that they shouldn't be

content because they're they're in their
second class citizens or something
but anyway I mean if if there's people
being shot in the streets you know just
sort of widespread phenomenon of that
and then you might be better off going
to Thailand instead or Sri Lanka but
um it worked really well for me I had my
my time in Burma
worked well I was under investigation on
political charges by the secret police
once but they did a professional job and
uh they could see easily enough that I
was just minding my own business out in
a cave in the woods I wasn't trying to
overthrow the government or anything
so yeah I mean if you should just I mean

it's hard to say for sure you probably
you should contact a meditation center
there and you know they'll give you this
straight news but looking at ordinary
news if Burma's ever mentioned it's like
sensationalistic propaganda stuff
you know

so anyway I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Ravi Rafi 46.

and uh I've been at this for about an
hour and we're about 60 of the way
through this veritable Cornucopia of
questions

Rafi 46 says was there anything that
touched you emotionally when you first
read about the life of the Buddha

that's kind of a nice question and
um not when I first read about it but I
remember one time I was riding a bus
through Burma just sitting in the bus
looking out the window and I was
thinking about you know the Buddha's
renunciation

how he renounced his his life
essentially you know his his wife and
his infant his infant son you know
against the wishes of his father and
just goes out and starts practicing
severe austerities I was I was getting
really emotional just thinking about
that

and um there's one thing that I read
about the death of the Buddha that

really moved me emotionally and that's
the Buddhas

um his final attendant he had attendance
before Ananda but his final attendant
for the past you know several years or
maybe decade or two I don't know exactly
how long Ananda was his personal
attendant

but Ananda was the Buddha's personal
attendant at the time of his death and
he was Ananda godama he was related to
go to mabuta he was the Buddha's cousin
and sometimes in the text the Buddha
will call him gotima

anyway after the Buddha dies

uh Ananda there's this scene where he's

just standing alone against a post

crying

and

part of the reason for that was that he
was so busy being the Buddha's attendant
that he didn't really have time to

practice uh to the point of

Enlightenment so he wasn't enlightened

yet

and so you know if you're if you're they
were enlightened they see you know all

forms are impermanent and you know this

is just the way it is but um that was

moving for me I mean Ananda he really

had his his human side he had a

reputation for kind of having a soft

spot for women to

and he's the one who talked the Buddha into allowing nuns to be ordained and that kind of a thing you know he'd get in trouble sometimes for being too friendly with nuns and so forth

well Tom yeah the Ananda crying and just thinking about the Buddha's renunciation he must have missed his wife and his his baby boy and all that you know he'd be thinking about them when he's starving himself out in the woods

so anyway I'll just move on to the next question from rafi46

and this is a really easy one what are your thoughts on Santi asuke and I have no idea what Santi soke is I really is

it a person is it a metaphysical state

I don't know Santi is like

I assume it means peace

and asoki is like sorrowless

sorrowless peace

sounds good to me but I really don't

know what what the reference is to so

I'll just move on to the next question

this is from dos boot

and dos boot says this is something I've

been thinking on for a long time years

ago I stopped accepting any horrible

processes like surveys or Loyalty cards

I don't know what an loyalty card is and

as corporate hell has evolved I've

gotten more and more allergic to its

insanities in flexibility and in general

inhumane approach one might say that there were historical precedents like decrees from a king or such but still these things are all pervasive now with the technology and remoteness itself represent a Twist of sorts on emotions or clashes of interest that before were resolved directly at least for me these things feel like their destructiveness is way harder to fend myself against as well as analyze any input around this would be appreciated

Hmm this is kind of a I mean it's hard for me to wrap my hand around this question the the main part of the question here is would the technology

and remoteness itself

like of post-modern digital information

age

interactions I guess represent a Twist

of sorts on emotions clashes of interest

that before will resolve directly so

it's like alienation I think like how

um instead of just sitting around

talking you're just looking into your

phone or whatever

um

with the technology and remoteness

itself represent a Twist of sorts on

emotions clashes of interest that before

were resolved directly yeah I assume

there's a greater distance between

people now than there used to be partly

just it's not even like the the
technology it's just individuality like
Western modern Western liberal
civilization puts a lot of emphasis on
individuality you know it's that you are
an individual a free individual
supposedly and people just didn't think
that way up until relatively recently in
modern times it's like uh I mean back in
the day people identified more with
their their Clan or their tribe or just
their family than with their individual
self you know they were just a part of
of the family
and uh
yeah also I had this image arise just

thinking of this that uh just the remoteness in a way it's made War a heck of a lot more dangerous because warm back and you know pretty modern times back in ancient times is guys stabbing at each other with Spears like face to face maybe maybe some archers and Slingers but as a general rule they're looking each other in the eyes when they're killing each other and that kind of tone things down a bit I think whereas now I mean a lot of people that are in the military that are killing people they're not even seeing who they're killing they're just launching cruise missiles or seeing a blip on a radar screen and launching a missile at

it or something

so yeah I mean we're definitely

alienated and uh

I don't know you can't it's hard to say

even if the way before we this wasn't

really natural because we're we're kind

of an artificial being and not that we

were genetically engineered by space

aliens necessarily but where I mean

our instincts have been totally modified

our lifestyle's been modified by culture

to such a degree that you know we're

living in a kind of a an artificial

reality uh just with all the straight

lines and right angles and you know laws

and statutes and stuff

but to the extent that uh technology is
inspiring a kind of separation and
alienation between people

uh yeah it's not necessarily a problem

I mean it's like

um one of my favorite mottos is it

doesn't matter what it is if you accept

it it's not a problem and it doesn't

matter what it is if you won't accept it

it's a problem

so yeah it's not necessarily a problem I

mean it's definitely a change

that uh

either you adjust to that change or you

just uh go off and

you know live in a log cabin and with a

wood stove fetch water in with a bucket

that can work too I mean that's not necessarily a problem either but I'm sorry I really can't answer this question in depth because it's really hard for me to fully wrap my head around it maybe it's just um not enough information or the information is uh expressed in such a way that it's it's hard to sink in for me or something so I'm just going to move on to the next question here this is spot from kitkat108 and KitKat 108 says what is the best advice to someone going through a breakup and you still love them if you could elaborate further it would be

appreciated thank you for doing what you
do

Ponyo from my heart

well

one thing to bear in mind is that love

is separate from the emotional

attachment I mean the emotional

attachment is kind of an instinctive

love you know it's like a human mating

instinct

but genuine love and spiritual sense is

just like open-hearted acceptance

and so

even if the person leaves

and you don't even necessarily want them

to leave

then I mean you can still love them it's

just the I mean the acceptance is still
is still there I mean forgiving them for
whatever they do isn't gonna I mean it's
it's invaluable in a relationship but
it's not going to help if they're just
Gonna Leave You Anyway I mean you just
forgive them for you know running off
with somebody else or something
but yeah I think that's one of the most
important things to to bear in mind is
that genuine true love is partly I mean
for starters it's unconditional or as
unconditional as you can humanly manage
and it's just not the same as the
attachment the emotional attachment
because the emotional attachment is is

what causes the suffering it's like
that's like in the four noble truths
like all suffering is caused by
attachment that's one of the the
variations on the second Noble Truth
it's either craving or it's attachment
just clinging
just insisting upon things being a
certain way is what causes suffering
so
apparently it's like the karma is
exhausted or something
and uh it may hurt because
due to you know Karma like uh just the
power of just the force of habit or
whatever there's the clinging and the
suffering but it will pass

and uh

the love is is just not the same thing
as the uh the the emotional attachment
and um

I was gonna say something just now damn
see

love acceptance

yeah I'm sorry that one just and just I
just lost it

but I mean love is good I mean if if you
can perfect love that's enlightenment

but I mean it should be as unconditional
as possible which means even if they

treat you badly or dump on you or

whatever I mean

that's just part of the practice that's

in a way it's a powerful spiritual
practice trying to to use like romantic
love as a spiritual vehicle
very challenging sometimes because
you're just dealing with another person
who's not under your control and they
can just do all kinds of things and I
mean you can get upset about it or you
can accept it
and that's I mean that's on you
so yeah I'm sorry that uh
someone is going through a breakup and
they still love them I mean I mean it's
better I mean ultimately it's better to
go through a breakup with You Still
Loving them than than just turning it
into hate I mean I mean true love I mean

it doesn't really cause pain unless it's
just the compassionate kind of suffering
with you know you're just feeling
another person suffering you know in
your own heart like compassion genuine
compassion

but it's not the the actual love aspect
that is causing the the pain of of
Separation it's the emotional attachment
which I mean in in poly like genuine
love would be like mental

but uh

um the kind of romantic
passionate kind of attachment you know
the emotional attachment stuff
it's called like pemo or sneha

which I mean anything called sneha is
not going to be very good
foreign

so I guess I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Air rain

and Aaron says why does abstinence and
moderation exist in Buddhist teachings
while at the same time there have been
in our many sex Cults and gurus within
Buddhism and Hinduism promoting group
sex and sex with teachers is this just
left over from the East-West exchange
that took place via the hippie movement
or is there supposed to be some dharmic
path in cuckolding men and turning women
out to religious leaders people like me
who are skeptical of humans running

religion see these scenarios play out over and over through our lifetimes and it plays a large part in our skeptical nature via organized religions how did the sexual Dynamic play out in Ancient India or is this just more American sexual relativism corrupting authentic Buddhism through men who are using Buddhism and other religions as a mean to cultivate their own sexual addictions part of the issue is the bad behavior itself and another part is the hiding denial and or enabling of it from the people and Authority well with regard to sex Cults in Buddhism I assume they exist I mean

you've got Tantra that can be abused
but um I mean it's just certainly not
built into Buddhism it's not like you
know there's anywhere in tarabada
Buddhism saying you know sex is good and
you should do it as much as possible
anything like that in Hinduism maybe
more you know there's more of an
emphasis on
um romantic love in Hinduism you know
like there's the idealization of Krishna
and Radha who who weren't even married
but they were lovers that kind of a
thing
and that can you know get distorted into
you know justifying that in some kind of
you know religious group or something

but in terrible Buddhism I've I've heard
of a few cases of
like just kind of rampant illicit sex
going on but not much it's very rare
there's it's mostly just rumors but I it
probably happened a lot more in the west
it does happen even in Asia partly just
because you know people are human you
know it's like lost you know a lot of a
lot of celibate men are struggling with
lost and you know right Peach just falls
into their lap they can't always resist
the temptation
so
there is that
so let's see why does abstinent

moderation exist in Buddhist teaching so
at the same time there have been and are
many sick Cults and gurus

within Buddhism Hinduism promoting group

sex and sex with teachers I don't I

don't know of any Buddhist group that

promotes group sex and sex with teachers

even though I I'm sure it happens you

know I've heard rumors of it happening

with like a relatively famous Burmese

monk two of them that I can that I can

think of

and then one kind of non-famous one that

I've heard of and I've read about monks

in Thailand that are very Shameless in

that respect

uh there was one

uh venerable what was his name

I don't even remember his name now it was kind of a big it was a scandal in the 90s he was a Thai Monk and he was going

um going I mean his books were published for free distribution by charitable organizations and and he was just going around the world giving Dharma talks and conducting Retreats maybe and uh finally um they found out that he was calling call girls to his hotel room and they even had proof because he was paying them with a credit card

and um so he was forced even he was forced by the the Thai government or the

Thai ecclesiastical Council or whatever
to to disrobe and he was just denying it
to the very end

um

although I mean the way he was denying
it was kind of kind of uh questionable
he was saying you know I I do not go to
sex place it was a lie but I mean they
weren't accusing him of going to a sex
place because he was just having the the
[__] delivered to his hotel room

then I heard later

about the same the same monk or an ex
monk at this point that he was in prison
in America for coming into America with
a fraudulent passport or VISA and then
after that I heard years later after

that even that he was uh
he was still dressing like a monk in
America he must have gotten out of jail
and somehow been allowed to stay instead
of being deported which is a status quo
nowadays and uh he was like putting on
like a toupee in layman's closing
clayman's clothing and they're like
taking pictures of him and discos and
stuff you know people recognizing him
there's this this monk or ex monk still
pretending to be one at a disco and then
he apparently got drunk
he was driving drunk and hit somebody
and killed them and then he just kind of
went crazy after that and he's like he's

got he's got like wild hair and
everything

I mean that I mean it does happen and
humans I mean just humans in general is
always going to be weird stuff happening
and I'm sorry I still can't remember his
name

on John something

but uh yeah I mean this

this up here about uh promoting group
sex and sex with teachers yeah I mean
maybe in some

like offshoots of Hinduism that can
happen in maybe tantric Buddhism that
can happen but serious terravada I mean
even the really liberalized places like
Spirit Rock they are so I mean verging

on paranoia about even a teacher even touching uh a student of the opposite gender like I knew this guy I still know him he was uh participating in leading a retreat I think it was at Spirit Rock and it was a retreat for teenagers and there was this one point where this teenage girl is is like melting down and crying you know telling her story and all he did is he just kind of put his hand on her shoulder and was like comforting her and then afterwards he was taken aside by some of the other teachers and said we are really not okay with you touching that girl and it's like I mean there's no harm done I mean

it was completely non-sexual but still I mean in in the west and in Terra water um yeah they're really really strict about that even though still it can happen you know slip through the cracks and so forth but uh I think I've just been uh distracted by the whole first part of the question and I need to continue reading this again see

is this just left over from the East-West exchange that took place during the hippie movement or is there supposed to be some dharmic pass and cuckolding men and turning women out to be to be religious to religious leaders well a lot of it in

the West is kind of the the hippie thing
or just not just even just the hippie
thing it's just the the sexual license
the sensuality of the West which is very
much restrained in in in Asia even in
Thailand where you've got you know the
lady boys and even a prostitute in every
village and all that still the monks are
supposed to be very strict and usually
they are but not always
but uh

there have been some teachers

I think Paul Lowe is one of them

that's uh

that there could be a dharmic path in
just sort of

sexuality

and even like sexuality was someone who
is not your spouse who might even be
somebody else's spouse

and um yeah I'm not gonna really get
into get into that particular thing but
I mean I don't think that I mean if you
go like a wise person goes about certain
things in certain ways then it's not
it's not the same as just you know the
the drunken guy going out picking up
chicks in bars

what Osho who got first pick of the all
the pretty sunyasins I mean I don't know
that means Osho I think I've given my
opinion before that he may have attained
something higher he may have been a

higher level of Consciousness than the average person in certain ways but then again a monkey is at a higher level of Consciousness than a sheep and a monkey's way naughtier than a sheep just because you're some kind of you know some higher vibration or something doesn't mean that you're going to be a good boy necessarily so let's see people like me who are skeptical of humans running religion see these scenarios play out over and over through our lifetimes yeah not so much with Buddhism that I'm aware of although it does happen sometimes and it plays a large part

in our skeptical nature of your
organized religions how did this sexual
Dynamic play out in Ancient India or is
this just more American sexual
relativism corrupting authentic Buddhism
through men who are using Buddhism other
religions as a means to cultivate their
own sexual addictions

um yeah again with regard to Buddhism I
mean Buddhism is is not nearly as uh I
mean this kind of thing is not nearly as
rampant as say you know homosexuality in
the Catholic church for example among
the clergy there

regarding the Hindus I really can't
speak very much and Tibetan Monks there
have been quite a few

um scandals with Tibetan llamas or just
Tibetan teachers

but I I'm I'm not really well acquainted
with Tibetan Buddhism either and in that
case also if you've got this restrained
Asian who all of a sudden comes to

America where you know girls are just
dressing like even prostitutes wouldn't
dress that way in Asia you know

like really it's like uh maybe I
shouldn't I I shouldn't I shouldn't tell
that story but um

yeah I mean it's just like wide open
it's like I remember a long time ago
there was some Burmese monks who came to
give a retreat in America probably

California

and it was I mean the monks were just amazed it was like a burlesque show you've got women in shorts and like no bra and everything like T-shirt with no bra at The Meditation Retreat and I mean the Burmese monks they've never been exposed to anything like that before and I assume a lot of them might just give in and and just given to Temptation pretty much like they do with money like you know your poor Village monk you don't get any money very little anyway and all of a sudden you come to America and people are just donating you know 100 bills then you know they'll just they'll just

break

you know a lot of monks have been ruined
by the West

partly just because of the culture is so
promiscuous and just uh sort of
promoting sensuality

but again let's see how did the sexual
Dynamic play out in Ancient India well
you're not going to really see how it
plays out in Ancient India because of
course the texts are going to be saying
you know monks just don't do that
you know there's like one story of some
woman trying to seduce mahakasaba who
was like the most ascetic of all the
Buddhist disciples and you know she's

just taking her clothes off and you know
kind of squirming in front of him and
lying down and spreading her legs and
everything and he's just you know he
just kind of glances at her just ignores
her and just walks away and that's what
you're supposed to do

and they're amongst the I mean I would
like to believe that most strict monks
would do that

oh let's see

part of the issue is the bad behavior
itself another part is the hiding denial
and or enabling of it from the people in
authority

yeah yeah it's it's again

in teravana Buddhism we are relatively

free of that but not entirely free just
because the people who participate in
taravana Buddhism are human beings
and animals I mean human beings are
relatively horny animal
as a general rule
so

let's see what is the gist what is what
is like the kernel of this question that
I can I guess it'd be at the very
beginning here why does abstinence and
moderation exist in Buddhist teachings
well at the same time there have been
and are many sex Cults and gurus yeah um
yeah in Hinduism again there's there are
certain precedents like like Krishna and

Radha or Krishna in the the 500 gopis
there's this one story Krishna he he
goes to this Riverbank and there are 500
Cowherd girls

it's a nice round number of 500 of them
and Krishna just multiplied his body
into 500 and had sex with all 500 of
them simultaneously not only that he had
sex with women just the way they liked
it

so I mean in Hinduism you know you got
precedence in the scriptures whereas
taravana is just dry and there's not
even a hint of any kind of promotion of
that

you know even even the the favored
disciples that were late disciples like

kind of top pandika you know who's like
this fabulously wealthy supporter of the
Buddha even he was supposedly celibate
even though he was married

so

yeah it's it's just going against what
the what the the texts teach what Dharma
teaches in in tarabana Buddhism

and really it's it's mainly terrible
Buddhism that I can speak with with any
kind of authority

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is also from erain

and Aaron says

if you had to choose between pumpkin pie
and key lime pie for Thanksgiving which

would you choose

yeah that's that's like uh

completely different kind of question

there isn't it and yeah definitely key

lime pie I mean I've never I mean

pumpkin pie is very edible you know I

can sit there and put away pumpkin pie

but

um you know it's just kind of

on a scale of like zero to ten with zero

being you know you have to spit it out

and 10 being you gotta change your

underpants after you eat it you know

it'd be only like a six you know it's

just slightly above you know the the

kind of average

not that I'm complaining you know it's

like I don't have anything against
pumpkin pie but key lime pie is really
good so yeah key lime and let's just
move on to the next question here and
this is from Rambo
also known as number 7dd42688
and brambo says what do you think of the
bikuni Sangha ooh
this is kind of a this is a dangerous
kind of question
but my personal opinion of the bikuni
Sangha is that the genuine bikuni Sangha
when extinct maybe like the 1600s Maybe
they're it's supposedly went extinct
before that but there are Chronicles in
Burma mentioning bikuni's you know

around the 16th 1600s

so yeah they went extinct I mean the

Buddha according to the legend the

Buddha didn't want to ordain bakunies to

begin with

Ananda as I mentioned a little earlier

talked him into it just saying well I

mean women can become enlightened just

like men can the Buddha had to admit to

it so finally Anon that talked him into

allowing the Buddha's stepmother also

his aunt

because

um she was both at the same time into

becoming the first bikini and after it

went extinct

um it takes bikinis to ordain bikunis so

um you once once the the lineage is
broken it stays broken unless something
happens and it seems to me that
um there's only two ways that the bikuni
Sangha could like legitimately
uncontroversially be uh revived one is
what the Burmese monks were always
telling me I was talking a little
earlier about how there can be
instantaneous paranormal sex changes and
there there's a at least one mention of
this in the Buddhist commentaries where
there was this I can't remember his name
sorea I think there was this Rich Layman
named sorea who is going by this River
and he sees

um an aura monk with this beautiful
golden skin bathing in the river and he
just thinks I wish my wife had skin like
that and because he was so irreverent to
this Aura hunt just immediately boom he
became a woman

and um

so I mean if a monk has that happen to
him preferably not for you know having
bad thoughts about our hunt then he
would be a bikuni he'd still be ordained
so long as there wasn't any interval
where he wasn't male or female it was
just kind of a eunuch because then he
would just be excommunicated for being a
unique because
eunuchs are not allowed to be ordained

so

that's one way or the other way would
you have to have a great counsel
you know there'd be the Sangha of the
four quarters would convene and then
they would like formally decide all
right the bikuni Sangha is going to be
revived we'll just have to break the
rules slightly you know the first
bikinis they won't be ordained by other
bikunis because there aren't any to
ordain them they'll just be ordained by
monks that'll be good enough
and if if that were done then probably
but it's it's not going to happen
realistically not anytime soon because

the monks who participate in these great councils are very old and conservative and they don't like to change anything so instead what you've got is some sort of renegade monks in Sri Lanka and in the west who just say well we're just going to ordain nuns just for gender equality just because it's it's the right thing to do but the weird thing about it is that

uh I've talked about this before where the rules are much stricter for bikunis than for monks and this is partly because

um

in India in ancient times and even today a woman might not even meet her husband

until their wedding day you know it's a pre-arranged marriage from childhood and so I mean she might get stuck with this [__] and so what was happening was a lot of women were just running away to monasteries and becoming nuns just to get away from this this [__] of a husband that they never wanted to marry

and in order to make sure that they had a genuine spiritual vocation that they weren't just getting away from a bad husband or whatever a bad house situation

that um they made the rules stricter for for nuns like there are four

paragica rules from monks if you break
any of these four rules you're
excommunicated immediately for bikinis
there are eight

a bikuni isn't even allowed to sit in
the presence of a monk a bikuni of even
the most senior bikuni still has to bow
to the most Junior monk it's they're not
even allowed to sit cross-legged

and they're they're supposed to sit with
their their feet kind of demurely tucked
up to one side like like Burmese ladies
sit on mats in Burma even today and so
what the the modern bikinis are doing
is

they're they're declaring themselves be
coonies and then they're just not

following the rules because the rules
are discriminatory against women and the
whole thing is just ridiculous because I
mean the whole purpose is is like gender
equality it just seems right that women
should be ordained also even though
according to the text that Buddha didn't
even like the idea
but he had to admit that women can
become enlightened so even though it
would make problems he'd say well okay
we'll we'll do it then but
they want to become real genuine bikunis
and then immediately they don't follow
the rules correctly
so it seems it seems way better to me

they should just start a new order it's just ridiculous that really all they want is the official status of being Mikuni an official status is something that is supposed to be renouncing when you renounce the world so they could just set up a new order with rules that rules that fit like the modern West might be exactly equal to the rules for men but they wouldn't be able to be called bikunies and and seems like that's the main thing it's like they want the official status and they don't follow the rules so it's just yeah I do not consider women calling themselves

bikinis nowadays to be like
authentically genuinely ordained bikunis
so anyway next question from uh Rambo
also known as number seven dd426a8
is how do they practice it differently
to because in Burma well there are no
bikunis in Burma I have been told any
woman declaring herself a bikuni in
Burma would just be jailed
however

there's this next question from Rambo I
noticed they wear pink robes could you
speak to the social political
differences for bikus and mikunis well
these women who are nuns wearing pink
robes they're not bikunis they're called

tilashins in Burma

um in the the pandita Rama tradition I

think they're called the thecashins

which means uh like possessors of

training whereas Stila shins his

possessors of virtue and I think in uh

Thailand they wear white and they're

called Machi and I don't know what Machi

means ma is just sort of a feminine word

it might be this woman or something

so

how do they practice differently to

bikus in Burma and could I speak to the

societal political differences for bikus

and bikunis well again in in Burma there

are no bikinis in Thailand also

officially there are no bikinis it's

just kind of a western liberal feminist
kind of a thing mostly I think the first
attempts were in Sri Lanka but it was
already kind of a westernized idea at
that time you know they were they were
trying to to live up to Western ideals
or something with regard to female
equality

but um yeah they were it's kind of like
a pink and sort of a orangey salmony
kind of color

and uh could I speak to the societal
political differences well I mean
politics is is not much to it there they
usually follow only eight or ten
precepts and in as opposed to the

literally thousands that monks are
supposed to follow
bikinis they would I mean they'd be
following even more rules than the monks
but because they're not bikinis they
only follow 8 or 10 precepts depending
on whether they handle money or not
and um they don't have the same respect
as
as monks partly because
somehow the Burmese have the spiritual
materialism where they think that
ordination just kind of transcends
humanity it's like if you are an
ordained monk then they don't even call
you a human being anyway the word for
human being is not used for monks

so they're you're like a superhuman
being a monk is whereas the bikinis or I
mean rather the the Tila shins they're
uh they received some respect also they
receive kind of some it's almost like
pity you know this people just kind of
feel sorry for them and so they support
them in that way because
um a lot of them I think probably most
of them are old maids that uh you know
they weren't pretty enough or Rich
enough to just to get a husband and so
they you know they make the make the
most of it and uh dedicate their lives
to religion and a lot of the time
they're I mean they're almost like

servants at some monasteries

they're you know they're the ones that
are cooking for the monks and that kind
of a thing

so is there's no equality at all
really

although in the west it's almost the
opposite I think bikuni is just partly
because it's like politically correct
and fashionable and that they might
receive more respect than uh monks in
general

unless you're like a really famous uh
like a high profile Monk

so

yeah I think I answered that and I'll
just move on to the next question also

from brambo or number seven dd4268

I follow and read a lot of books and content by monks but struggle to find inspiring works by nuns do you have any recommendations

well with regard to terawada nuns I I'm unacquainted with any book by them I'm sure they're out there

probably published by like Shambhala or something

um there's what Pema children I think she'd be the most famous nun she's a Tibetan nun but she's considered to be very wise I haven't read any of her books I've you know I've read little passages of things that she said

um pay my children is that right

so yeah I mean it's uh even the the

Terry Gata

which is

um and it's one it's part of the

polytopitica it's a it's a polytext

consisting of

um verses written by enlightened nuns

and the the experts you know the the

academic types who study these kind of

things study the grammar and everything

um a lot of them are of the opinion that

really is just kind of made up that most

of it was probably written by or

composed by monks you know just uh for

edification purposes although uh on the

police versus in the Terry Gata are very

nice she was a courtesan she gave the
Buddha one of his last meals before he
died you know she was a high-class
prostitute essentially and uh she was
inspired by the Buddha and uh became a
nun

and then the the verses

um humble police verses are sort of
comparing you know how she used to live
with how she is now

so it's it's good it's worth reading I'm
sure you could find that on the internet
easily enough but whether it was really
written by her or composed by her or
composed by even any woman is
questionable

so I'll just move on to the next
question from Rambo

are monks and nuns living outside of Sri
Lanka aware of the sheer volume of dark
magic and sorcery conducted by Sri

Lankan monks often with lay women as the
object are they aware of the rape abuse
and sex trafficking well this is I mean

I should have paid more attention to
this question before answering Aaron's
question because this is probably some
kind of taravada or offshoot of it

anyway if so is this something that is
discussed and attempted to be prevented
or is it just accepted as part of the
way things are does this also happen in
Burma and Thailand I lived in Sri Lanka

for two years and I experienced a rather
rude awakening whilst unknowingly living
in a village that is historically famous
for black magic your videos have helped
me to come to terms with what happened
and put my trust where I couldn't
anymore so thank you very much indeed
well you're welcome yeah I've never even
heard of this before learning monks and
nuns living aware of the sheer volume of
dark magic and sorcery conducted by Sri
Lankan monks often would lay women as
the object well I mean I've heard of
um Burmese monks practicing black magic
and necromancy but it wasn't for the
sake of abusing women I've never I've

never heard that before

so yeah this is something peculiar to

um

Sri Lanka I guess I mean Sri Lanka Sri

Lankan monks are very lacks they have a

reputation there is sort of there are

like reform movements in the forests of

Sri Lanka but Sri Lankan monks in

general are extremely relaxed with

regard to following the rules so it

wouldn't surprise me I remember there

was one Young American monk telling me

that he had a Sri Lankan monk tell him

that

um it's not parajika to have sex so long

as you practice can we just interrupt

this

as long as you're not as long as you
pull it out and squirt outside then it's
it's not paragica which is just nonsense
so yeah rape abuse and sex trafficking
and what was monks practicing black
magic yeah this is the first I've ever
heard of it

I mean it exists you know I mean if it's
possible it's a big big world
then I guess it's happening somewhere
but it's certainly not the norm and it's
certainly not
officially condoned by anybody that I'm
aware of

so yeah I'm sorry that uh it happened
and uh I would advise people to stay

away from Villages that are famous for
black magic monks

sorcery

yeah that's dangerous

so

yeah

yeah I was I lived in Burma for 24 years
and never heard anything resembling that
going on in Burma the whole time I was
there

and I mean when you're a monkey and

you're behind the scenes you know

monks are really good at a kind of

hypocrisy where they'll although they'll

act wholly in front of the lay people

who are their donors but then you know

when when they're by themselves you know

they're just you know giggling and
joking and just fooling around and you
know behaving inappropriately in certain
ways but um

yeah so I've lived behind the scenes I
I've seen what monks are like when
nobody's looking and still I never heard
anything remotely resembling this
so it's probably I mean the ties are
pretty naughty too and the Sri Lankans
are just extremely lacks in their
practice

but Burma first of all they're very
stoic they're like Spartan in Burma you
know they're just not essential people
they don't care what their food tastes

like you know they just sleep on on like
wooden boards they just don't care
and they're just not a very like
romantic sensual kind of people and so
that kind of thing is just less likely
to happen in Burma just because of the
national character Maybe

so anyway I'll just move on to the next
question this is this is turning into a
long one

this is from Matthew

and Matthew said how do you feel about
mahasi Seattle's book practical Insight
Meditation I love the brevity do you
think he is a fraud or is there some
pragmatic information in there I think
I've got the little booklet up on the

Shelf there

practical Insight Meditation I think it was just a transcript of a talk that he gave to beginners at a retreat that was considered to be so good that they just wrote it down I think they recorded it also and so you just like beginners would just hear the recording of of mahasi Seattle or the the English translation if they're foreigners so it's good advice I do not consider mahasi Seattle to be a fraud meditation tradition it's it's good for beginners and intermediate practitioners but once you get up to like the the intermediate level you should probably

move on to a different method I once
asked one of the wisest Burmese monks I
knew

um

what he thought of the mahasi tradition
and he said you can get benefit from
practicing it but it is a limited method
and I I agree with that it'll take you
up to a certain level

and then uh I don't think it's really
equipped to deal with higher levels or
if it does it just kind of happens
spontaneously to us a monk who's like
really ripe he's like really good at
meditation you can you can get up into
these levels but uh generally they'll
take you up to like what they consider

to be the level of a soda Palmer or
stream enterer and then that's it you
finish the course you're done and then
you just start reading the paper and
listening to the radio and goofing
around

Meditation Center you know the ones that
are the the Arias the sodaponas because
they're the ones that aren't practicing
they're the ones goofing around

so but I mean Mazzy Seattle himself was
not a fraud I mean he had some wisdom he
was definitely very intelligent and
there is pragmatic information in there
so

I'll say that much

so I'll just move on to the next
question and I shouldn't skip a week and
this is this is what happens when I skip
a week the list becomes so long now that
I'm complaining you're all welcome to
ask questions

it's good for you

this is from tarot reader or Tarot

tarot reader why don't you discuss

totalitarian fascist emerging New World

Order well actually I kind of do

sometimes like the the latest blog post

that I wrote which is discussing the uh

discussing the midterm elections in

America

um yeah it's kind of moving a little bit

in that direction a little there's a few

a few hints tossed out there

but uh

yeah I call it the Brave New World of
order

but whether it's really fascist or not I

suppose it's going to become more

fascist as they gain more control

and totalitarian yeah I mean even even

uh some of the social media are already

getting totalitarian or you just not are

not allowed to discuss forbidden

subjects regardless of how true they

might be

so

why don't you discuss totalitarian

fascist emerging New World Order yeah

you might want to look at Brian Rue's
channel on bit shoot he's more into that
than I am

I'm more just I you know I call them as
I see them and I I talk about Buddhism
or just other things from a kind of a
Buddhist perspective

sometimes I'll point out that Buddhism
really is not equipped to deal with
certain things in just the secular world
like like violence

but uh yeah I mean if you look at my
blog you'll find that kind of stuff I
mean there are certain tags you can look
up like uh you know culture war and
neo-marxism and that kind of thing

so

yeah I'll just move on to the next

question this is from rui

and rui says hello Ponyo don't know if

this question will make through but here

goes looking at the Mind sitting

standing walking lying down I've come to

see it as an impersonal or non-personal

Mega narrative maybe that's

metanarrative

it's kind of gene in though building

machine a personal

okay I've come to see it as an

impersonal or non-personal Megan

narrative building machine

this Insight is certainly not new but I

wonder whether this view or looking is a

direct experience of anata that is
always available and right at hand
well yeah is always available just an
insight into no self

that I mean this the meat puppet isn't
you

yeah that would be I mean if you see
clearly enough you'll see it

and uh I mean there's probably levels of
your Consciousness that are seeing it

all the time it's just that your mind is
making so much noise you're just

distracted by all the thoughts and the
perceptions and so forth and you don't

notice some of this stuff that's always
there

so

so yeah the mega narrative or
metanarrative building machine

um yeah I don't understand that part

so I'll just move on to next question

and this is from Matthew I think I think

there there was another one from Matthew

maybe it was a different Matthew I don't

know

sorry Matthew

but this uh this is from Matthew and

Matthew says is there any schools within

taravada that teach pragmatic meditation

both the genre and insight do you

believe that there are some sincere

teachers who can teach and enjoy it

well

Paul teaches Jonah and uh the Insight is
I mean it comes in he's very strict um I
mean I don't know if Paul Seattle's even
alive anymore he's he's left palm Doyle
or he did that

several years ago

but uh yeah there are teachers who teach
both Jonah and insight my I mean the
founder of the tradition which I was
ordained venerable Tong pool Luciano who
has now passed away he taught samata and
vipassana I mean he taught you know like
samadhi-based meditation and also
mindfulness based meditation
which is good

um

I think it's probably best for a

monastic a renuncian especially to
practice Jonna while sitting and then be
practicing mindfulness when doing
anything else

and there are teachers that teach that
um nowadays I'm not sure who the
teachers would be though to tell you the
truth it might be Western monks might be
better at it than Asian monks so uh I
mean it could be even ajanta nisaro like
around San Diego in California he might
teach both I assume he does

so um

yeah so the answer to that is yeah

um both Jana and inside

yeah I mean according to the text

Insight arises can arise from Janna

you know you have

you have like the genre experience and

then after you come down from that and

then there's there's like I mean it's

called review or something but it's just

I mean you can just get struck by things

it's like

some insights that arise I mean they

might not be on the official list of

insights but you can still have powerful

insights like you practice a meditation

method similar to Jonna where you just

stop thinking your mind is just clear

you know like like glass

and um when you come out of that I mean

there's the Insight that wow it's like

when you stop thinking it's just not
blank unconsciousness you can stop
thinking your mind is just clear you
know and not even really perceiving
anything necessarily and you're more
awake you're more conscious than when
you're when you're not doing this like
it's not you because you know it's it
can stop and you don't die you know you
don't go into a coma
so

um yeah I mean if you can't find a
teacher who teaches it it's right there
in the sutra as you can study the sutras
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Chaplin

if you had to guess about what
percentage of American Buddhists are
practicing authentic Dharma that has not
been corrupted by Western culture
well

uh I divide that into two groups you've
got the monks and you've got the lay
people

and we'll go to the monks it might be as
high as 50 percent

I mean there's always going to be
certain Corruptions but it's not going
to be so much Corruptions by Western
culture like it could be Corruptions by
traditional Thai culture like the monks
that they go to Thailand or they're
following a Thai tradition which is

probably most western monks are following a Thai tradition especially the ajan cha tradition and there are Corruptions in Dharma that are just traditional Thai culture or traditional Burmese culture but uh there's not a whole lot of corruption by Western culture unless they're just uh you know really into YouTube and uh you know electronic gadgets and stuff um with regard to lay people what percentage of American Buddhists are practicing authentic Dharma that has not been corrupted by Western culture I'd guess it could be very few

probably less than five percent
just because Western culture is so
pervasive and they're because you're a
layperson you're not renouncing Western
culture you're still in Western culture
and it's just gonna have a corrupting
influence on Dharma because Western
culture just is not particularly dharmic
so

there is that and I'm going to just move
on to the next question I think this is
the very last question boom just snuck
up on me so this is this very last
question of the evening or whatever time
of day you're watching this is from
Motorhead

and Motorhead says Ben experiencing some

very Vivid dream meditation States
recently and seeing through the illusion
of our Dream Consciousness dreaming of
our reality type insights still getting
strong synchronicity with you and Brian
can you say anything about this and
other people I know feel the same
this is kind of a tough one because I'm
not exactly sure what he's referring to
he's been experiencing some very Vivid
dream meditation States recently and
seeing through the illusion of our Dream
Consciousness
um I assume it's like while sitting in
meditation
he's having like Vivid like dream images

I mean that's that's happened to me
before or could it be you know he's like
lying down and kind of dreaming and I I
assume lying I mean meditation lying
down doesn't work very well because you
fall asleep too easily but um for most
people

so I assume what he means here is

Wiley's practicing

some kind of sitting meditation or maybe
even walking meditation

he's having Vivid dream states

and uh seeing through the illusion of
our Dream Consciousness yeah well I mean
this is a dream where this is not
reality

this it really is not reality

it's uh it's like a virtual reality it's
kind of like the Matrix except it's
probably not a big computer that we're
in

um still getting strong synchronicity
with with me and Brian that's that's
good

yeah I've had people comment on that
where

um

yeah we'll

tell a story about our life and it's
like the same thing that happened to
them

that kind of thing

um

yeah I really can't say much about it
though because I don't know exactly what
is being referred to here it's it's kind
of a vague
statement without much uh concrete
content that that I can really get a
grip on so I'm sorry Motorhead maybe you
can ask again
uh in a in like different words
but uh
that's it my golly we finished it it's
less than two hours
barely
so
um yeah if you have any questions
especially about Buddhism or you know
philosophy

um spirituality meditation Burma me
personally anything you think I might be
able to answer any question you think I
might be able to answer
um feel free to to ask them and uh do
please ask them like in the comments
under a q a video or if you have access
to
um the Discord server you can ask them
there there's even a q a room there or
you if you have access to my subscribe
star account then then you can you can
ask your questions there but uh lately
especially some people are asking
questions in odd places and I can't
guarantee that I'll see it and and put

it on the list if it's in an unusual
place that you ask the question if you
send me an email personally then yeah
I'll see it and then I'll write it down
but like an old video I've had people
ask questions it's like q a number two
just recently and it's like I mean I see
the notifications sometimes
but um yeah so if you have any questions
just uh include them in the in the I
guess the easiest would be in the
comments below
and uh
all my all my links are down below
including the links to my books and so
forth so just take a look at that and uh
like And subscribe if you haven't done

so already just smash that like button
as they say and be happy

hello and welcome to question and answer
number 37 I am your host Ponyo bossa
and uh 37 I'm answering so many
questions it's not even funny
and there's quite a few questions this
time like maybe 30 questions
people are really uh really asking a lot
of questions possibly because it's
turning into wintertime and they're just
kind of sitting around in the house in
the dark and
thinking up questions I don't know
but because there's so many I will uh
spare you all the details of going down
to the basement and finding two Mama
dogs just crapping all over the place

ah man it's just amazing little two
little dogs this big over the course of
the evening crapped six big piles and I
assume it's because many of you don't
realize this but Mama dogs eat their own
baby's poop so it's like they're just
like recycling it or something
but uh let's answer questions it's
talking about dog crap is just not good
very good anyway I mean some people are
into that talking about dog crap and
stuff but okay let's just answer
questions
and the first question is from toward a
Buddhist kidism kindism
k-i-n-i-s-m
this is a the name is more difficult

than the question I think

she's uh he changes his name a lot so I
won't have to deal with this one for
for very much longer I think but anyways
towards a Buddhist

kinism

or kindism

asks what books would you recommend for
the study of Paulie

and I can say as I've said before the
books I used for studying Paulie when I

was a junior monk were the new

polycourse by AP Buddha data who

apparently is a monk

and it's very simply put forward and

it's it's easy to follow and

um there are three volumes I didn't
bother with the third volume because it
was mostly like translating passages of
poetry from the commentaries or
something

um but the first two the first two
courses are good also uh

uh if you don't have access to that I
have been told that AK Waters uh poly
grammar is is good

also the only poly grammar I have got
on the bookcase back there is uh it's a
poly grammar by a person named durocell
who lived in Burma during like the
British Raj

and that'll work too if you can find
neural cells

um polygrammer but as I say Buddha data is about the best that I have seen I haven't really looked carefully at AK Waters although that's received a lot of Praise also

but um yeah the book I would recommend for studying Polly would be the new poly chorus by AP Buddha data and once you get it down a little bit then start reading simple stuff jonnica's stories tend to be fairly simple a lot of the sutas are simple

um winnia is is simple but uh you might not be interested in reading reading the uh ancient books of monastic discipline although there's lots and lots of

stories in those and uh try and stay
away from poetry and commentary and of
course I'll be dhamma until you're more
advanced

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Mary spelled
m-e-r-r-y

and Mary says hey John I would like to
get your opinion on dotonga practice one
more time I have read the sutas and how
it is and how is it that one meal a day
is do Tonga and wearing one set of robes
is dutonga and living in a forest is
dutonga when according to sutas
everybody did that as a regular practice
in Buddhist times please explain thank
you well that is true and I've I've

noticed that when I was a monk a long time ago that uh

um one of the dutongas or optional ascetic practices for monks I suppose I should back up a little and explain that a dotonga is uh one of 13 optional ascetic practices that monks are allowed to follow

and uh

and as Mary here says that uh eating one meal a day is one of the datanga

practices uh having only three robes

is also a dotonga practice living in a

forest is a dutana practice also there's

a bunch more like never lying down or

living in a cemetery living under the

root of a tree or not under the root
living at the foot of a tree
uh living under the Open Sky eating only
alms food wearing robes that are made
out of Rags that sort of a thing
and uh yeah as Mary says some of these
are just plain Winnie like keeping only
three robes the only difference between
um

just following the rule and following
Tonga is that according to the Lavinia
rule you're allowed to keep an extra
robe for no more than 10 days
whereas if you're following the dutonga
then you wouldn't even keep an extra
robe for 10 days eating one meal a day
is not really avenia rule

um I mean a monk is allowed to eat
between Dawn and noon Dawn and midday
although there is one statement I think
it's in winnia where somebody is wanting
to ordain and the the preceptor or the
senior monk who has been asked to ordain
this layperson tells him well one meal a
day is not easy you know he gives this
list of things that are not easy
so I mean it is mentioned but it's not
really a rule
and uh I think most terracotta Buddhist
monks
uh really exploit that one and um I've
heard of some there was one Burmese
Monastery in uh I think it was in

Singapore where the Hmong somehow managed to get three meals in between Dawn and noon which uh is kind of pushing you I mean you can you can gain weight just eating one meal a day once you get used to it

um living in the forest well it's uh yeah I think most monks did that in the Buddhist time but the thing is the dutonga rules are not canonical they're not in the sutras themselves

um except maybe there's mention of it and like you know sometimes there's mention of a monk being a three robes where that's actually in in the tapitica but that would be a late addition I'm pretty sure because in all likelihood

hold amongst probably started off with
just the the one set of three robes
um so the the actual list of the
dutongas is found in the wisudi Maga
which is commentarial and that's uh
composed maybe you know close to a
thousand years after the time of the
Buddha it's based on earlier
commentarial texts but still it's
probably later you know the list of the
formalized list of 13 new tongas and the
three levels of each tutonga easy medium
and hard
um you know they they just post a date
the depicted and probably by the time
the dutongas were finalized

um

by the time the nikitangas were finalized monks had already started kind of slacking on one meal a day and three robes and all that there's there's all these loopholes like with regard to uh three robes I mean you you read even relatively strict monks books on Winnie I'm like well I won't name any names but there's a big one out I mean one of the main ones nowadays they just say well if you have want to keep extra robes and you don't want to break the rule just call them something other than robes call them accessory cloth because according to the rules of discipline among monk monks are allowed

to keep extra cloth like bags and water filters you know just Rags for wiping their feet that kind of a thing and um so that's just called accessory cloth uh parikara chola

and so

um monks are advised nowadays because very few follow the three robes thing I did at the time when I was a monk but very few monks do

um videos call it something else which is cheating you know obviously if you're wearing it as a robe it's a robe but um I'll just move on to Mary's next question because there's so many questions it's not even funny

not complaining though this is uh this
is good it's good to ask questions
sweet tea

I'm down south

what are differences between Burmese
teravada traditions

well that's kind of a good question
there's

I suppose at first I should just
differentiate that there's like the
Orthodox Burmese Terra water traditions
and then you've got sort of the weird
like Alchemists and wayzas and sort of
like the
uh

they're more interested in just magic
and and that sort of thing so there's

there's some of those in Burma I really
don't know that much about them

but there are supposedly some Adept
Alchemist monks in Burma that are
following like alchemical terrible at a
Burmese Buddhist traditions

um but with regard to uh like more
mainstream more Orthodox Burmese Terra
water traditions

um you've got different what are called
guides in Burma that are like sex like
subsets like in in Thailand the two main
ones the two are are like uh was it
mahanikaya and damayu and the dhamma you
are the the stricter sect of the two
and they've got that in Burma also I

think all together the main sects

there's a total of something like 11. 9

or 11

. most of them are obscure some of them

are just localized to mum's State like

there's uh just

um it's the same tradition that the

dhamma you Thai tradition is based on is

still existing in one state and I really

don't know that much about it there's

one there's one guy called the

mahadevaragine which uh almost the only

difference is just in this one

non-canonical chant that they do they

say mahadawara instead of the usual poly

word mahadur doesn't mean the great door

I'm not even exactly sure what

um these what the most uh terabado sex
would would say instead of great door
because I don't recall which
which chant it is
so so there's that also and um in Burma
the two main ones in Burma are sudama
and schweijin thudima is sort of like
the mahani Kaya it's like most monks in
Burma are belong to the pseudomon gyne
shui Jin is slightly stricter although
there are some really outrageously
Shameless Seattles in Burma who are
schwagen

um

and then you get down to within within
the guides you've just got different

tradition different meditation

Traditions especially like I was

ordained in the tongpulu tradition which
was in the studemangine

um you've got the mahasi tradition which
I think also is stoodama

I'm not 100% sure on that I think I'm

pretty sure it's through tomorrow but

then the the Burmese are not as

exclusive as the ties like the ties in

Thailand the the dama youth members of

the dhamma you sect won't even I mean

they will not even do ceremonies with

with other monks because they just

consider them not to be fully ordained

whereas in Burma the schweizen and the

thudoma monks you know these intermingle

and do ceremonies together and so forth

um I think most of the differences in
the mainstream
mainstream traditions

uh it's just with regard to meditation
technique

um the tongpalu tradition which I was
ordained also put some emphasis on
ascetic practice and Forest dwelling so
that was one of the things that
attracted me to it

um for example it's just a tradition
that

um Tong Pulu monks don't lie down they
follow the sitting dutonga you know I
just mentioned dotongas and um they

usually sleep in chairs they'll sit in
like a reclining or not really reclining
just kind of a wicker chair that you
know it doesn't have a completely
straight back you know it kind of leans
back a little bit they sleep in one of
those

um

but uh yeah the main differences are
with regard to meditation like you've
got the Paul tradition which um you know
it does more of the genre type
meditation it's a little stricter in
Vania that's another that's another uh
difference is just with regard to
strictness of how they follow winnia
like some founders of traditions will

have some peculiar interpretation of certain rules that all of his followers will have to follow Paul Seattle was was sort of like that

um mahasi tradition is possibly the still the main or the the most popular tradition in Burma and they just follow a straight Sadi batana or uh Sadi batana as mahasi Seattle interpreted it you've got uh MoGo which does a lot of emphasis on studying the traditional

interpretation of pedicia samupata

you've got uh or Sunland which um

I'm not exactly I've never practiced the Sunland method but I do know that it involves like heavy breathing so it's

another it's another meditation

difference

so the main difference is in the among

the different Traditions just setting

aside the different kinds or sects

it's mainly with regard to meditation

techniques that are emphasized and

taught and to some degree also with a

few other things like following certain

veneer rules the shui Jin monks also

wear a kind of a brick red kind of a

robe or a reddish brown like a russet

color whereas the pseudomon monks will I

mean there's more of a spectrum of

allowable colors

but for the most part I was just setting

aside like the the Alchemists and the

sorcerers and all that

um it's it's there's a way more

similarities than differences

so I'll just move on to Mary's next

question

and this is kind of a nice one I like

this question

why is it that I cannot drink coffee

with a little milk in the afternoon but

it is okay for me to eat dark chocolate

and honey and even cheese in some

terravonna monasteries permission to

drink coffee with milk to not fall

asleep seems more fair and intuitive

well yeah this is kind of an issue in uh

in uh teravada Buddhism and this uh

let's see eating dark chocolate and cheese that's a Thai thing they just for some reason Thai monks they want to say that eating cheese in the afternoon is okay starting with just what their belly wants I think and then they kind of use reverse logic to find the most plausible justification for it

and one of the main justifications for Thai amongst eating cheese in the afternoon is that actually cheese is a kind of butter which is allowable which is a very lame argument and would not persuade anyone who isn't easily persuadable or who isn't in a Thai tradition and is just following along foreign

ification for time monks eating dark
chocolate in the afternoon is that dark
chocolate supposedly is like a hardened
juice

which is pretty lame also uh I didn't do
either of those but with regard to honey
um yes the Buddha according to the the
rules of monastic discipline you know
the polytechs themselves the winning of
Pentagon the Buddha allowed
um five tonics

that can be kept for up to a week and
used mainly for medicinal purposes and
that includes honey it's like honey
molasses

uh see

or or just any kind of sugar really

including palm sugar

uh butter ghee and oil which is mostly

um sesame oil but just any kind of

edible oil including animal oils you

know like lard as long as it's rendered

it's allowable to keep for a week so it

was these five tonics were allowed in

the afternoon but only for medicinal

purposes like

um you know you've got hypoglycemia or

something

um or you're just not feeling well you

know you just need a little boost like

you feel like you're starting to catch a

cold or something you need a little

boost to kind of you know improve your

immune system efficiency or something
although I mean this also is it's just
completely abused by by monks and it
goes back centuries because according to
the commentaries

um if you're feeling hungry that can be
considered a sort of illness and so you
can eat sugar you know hard candy or
something in the afternoon and that that
gets used a lot in uh in Burma they've
got this stuff called sedumadu which is
a mixture of four of the the five
allowable tonics it doesn't have butter
in it it's got oil ghee
money and and palm sugar I think and
it's I mean after I burned out on it it

just started tasting gross to me so I didn't really indulge in that but a lot of monks will have that in the afternoon because you're not allowed to eat solid food or uh bogena in the afternoon and the thing with milk is that milk is counted as substantial food it is Bojana and so you're not allowed to have cow's milk in the afternoon you can have the coffee and as a monks sometimes I would just put some sort of vegetable milk you know like coconut milk or like almond milk something like that you can have that in the afternoon well actually some Burmese monks say coconut milk isn't allowable for this

this obscure weird I mean I we don't
need to get into the Obscure weird
reasoning

um for for the Assumption made by some
Burmese monks and I think erroneously
that coconut milk is not available in
the afternoon because it is essentially
the juice of some kind of fruit or in
this case maybe a a large seed a nut
so

um yeah you can drink coffee in the
afternoon

um strangely a lot of strict Burmese
monks will not drink tea in the
afternoon because there is this obscure
rule in the rules of monastic discipline

that the juice of any Leaf is allowable
to drink in the afternoon except the
juice strain from cooking greens you
know like you boil some spinach and then
you drain off the green water that the
spinach is boiled in you're not allowed
to drink that because that technically
would be considered a kind of soup or
something I'm not sure exactly what the
reasoning is and
um it just happens that in in Burma
tea leaves are are eaten as a green
there's a it's really good actually tea
leaves make a really nice salad
and they get you zing too if you eat too
much
and uh so they've considered tea a lot

of the stricter monks we'll consider tea
to be watered drained off from you know
sort of cooking these greens

but um

yeah to drink the coffee is is no

problem it's just the cow's milk in the
afternoon and

um the Thai is eating dark chocolate and
cheese in the afternoon is just uh I

consider to be a corruption and monastic
discipline that they uh even intelligent
relatively strict monks will justify

largely through uh herd Instinct I think
so I'll just move on to Mary's next
question

and uh this one was right under the wire

I think Mary posted this just this morning

why Consciousness is not ourselves every
conda is not us but Consciousness is
just observing other condas like seeing
is not us hearing and so forth but
Consciousness we can do let it be that
way or this way because we can sleep or
take drugs or alcohol so we can do this
and we can will fully change our
Consciousness at will any time it just
observes uh everything else and
everything else we cannot control
well um this is sort of a reference to
the anata Allah or the the discourse on
the mark of no self
which according to tradition was the

Buddha's second discourse after his
Enlightenment which caused his first
five disciples to become fully
enlightened
and according to the anata
we cannot say with any of the five
condos that number five
um like the constituents of which we are
composed which is
a physical I mean it's the body and
you've got
feelings perceptions uh will and
consciousness
or with Will is Con as a Karma
formations is like the more the more
usual translation although it mainly it

means Evolution or will

so

Mary here is suggesting that although

um the first four are not us the the

fifth one or consciousness

uh could be considered us and actually I

mean it's it's never suggested by the

Buddha in the texts that Consciousness

is a self although there are a few

obscure references in the sutas to

formless infinite Consciousness being

Nirvana or Nirvana

and so the problem here

is that first of all it's never said to

be a self and even if it even if it is

the self it's sort of like Atman in the

upanishads where everybody has the same

self

um I've had the argument with regard to

uh

in like the five condas that I mean we

can say let it be this way let it not be

that way and uh have it happen but it's

not reliable like even with our body I

mean I want my arm to go up it goes up

you know or I want my hair to be dark I

can just dye it

or you know whatever you know you you

want to change your perceptions you just

turn and look at something else or just

deliberately think about something else

so we do have some control we just do

not have total control like when you're

dying you can't just say let my

Consciousness persist

you know let me not die

or

um

Consciousness is really philosophically

uh problematic for terrible Buddhism

because they really do not have a good

explanation for it I do I got a good

explanation for it

and that's that Consciousness is just

the substance of our mentality whereas

the mental States or just the like the

form of it you know you've got

you know this this little piece of cloth

here right the substance of that would

be

cloth or or cellulose mainly
and but the form is this little square
cloth with the
a little crisscross the edges on it
so I mean it's the substance in the form
are simultaneous and you know they they
have to exist at the same time you can't
take away the form without taking away
the claws you can't take away the cloth
without taking away the form you know
the substance the form are just they're
just simultaneous and at the same at two
different levels of of Truth or reality
and you could say that with regard to
consciences Consciousness and
perceptions for example

you know it's like Consciousness is the
essence of mind the Mind energy or the
the whatever undefined
and that the perception is the form that
it assumes
so

but still the thing the problem with
terrible Buddhist philosophy dealing
with Consciousness is that
they they say I mean they admit that
Consciousness has to be simultaneous
with the mental state that it just sort
of is the the field or ground for the
mental state to take place
and they consider to be just completely
completely different from uh any of the
mental States and it's not a mental

state in and of itself according to
abhidharma there are four ultimate
realities which is physical matter mind
mental States and Nirvana or nirvana in
mind and mental states are just
considered to be just absolutely
different

ah

but the thing is I mean it's like bound
to the mental state so I mean to some
degree it conforms to the mental state
which I mean it's it's abhidham this is
an orthodox terrible and I don't really
endorse this but that is what the texts
say
and so

um

to the extent that you can't control
your mental States you also can't
control the Consciousness that is bound
up with that mental state or just
serving as the the foundation or the
ground for that mental state but if you
want to say that Consciousness
ultimately is just infinite and formless
and we're sort of partaking of just a
localized little bit of that
consciousness

then even that is not considered to be
the self you know this infinite formless
Consciousness that pervades the entire
universe

um

first of all anything that's infinite
and formless is going to just be
paradoxical you can't really say that it
exists or doesn't exist
and that's kind of what that's kind of
the attitude of Buddhism in general I
mean it's if it's infinite and formless
you just don't reapply it and turn it
into an it which turns it into something
samsaric

so I mean there's a little bit of
uh like philosophical uh [_]
going on with regard to Consciousness it
seems to me I mean it doesn't make good
sense to me although there are lots of
Buddhist Scholars out there it seems to

make perfect sense to them

but um

yeah Consciousness is not ourselves

simply because it's not our

Consciousness if even if you say that

there is an infinite formless

Consciousness then

um you know it's just kind of an

illusion that part of that is supposedly

our identity

as as opposed to any any anything else

uh it's hard to discuss it's hard to

explain this kind of stuff

the human language is not designed to

discuss Ultimate Reality

is more designed to discuss you know

what we're going to eat for dinner and

my butt itches and you know there's a
there's a bear outside the cave and that
kind of thing

so I hope I hope I answered that one and
I'll just move on to the next question

which is kind of a tricky one this is
from Diane and Diane says

for you is achieving Enlightenment
easier in this cultural environment
being a layperson or being a monk

well

um being a monk

um I mean it was designed by the Buddha
and also I mean he was just adapting
slightly a pre-existing tradition in
Ancient India I mean it's designed for

enlightenment

um the thing is so like in Burma you
want to become enlightened you're better
off being a monk than just living and
not in in the Hut with the wife and
three kids and the old maid aunt and all
that Grandma and Grandpa
you know going out and working every day
well the thing is in in America
um it doesn't work as well so for some
people

I think

not necessarily achieving Enlightenment
but at least making spiritual progress
is

it may be easier for some people not
being a monk in the secular West simply

because it receives so little support
culturally and materially
um and if if a monk does get support as
a general rule he's just sort of under
house arrest you know he's just like
has to stay in this one place and you
know he has to please his supporters so
that they continue supporting him and so
forth and um in a way it is
very limiting on uh personal freedom
so

uh with regard to you

um is it easier to get closer to
Enlightenment I mean that's just a
temporal thing I suppose if assuming
that it's inevitable that I'm going to

become enlightened someday

you know or or anybody who's going to

get enlightened someday then every

minute that passes is taking you a

minute closer to your enlightenment

and even if you're going into hell or

whatever you know like they would data

like the Buddhist uh Judas Iscariot you

know he was the cousin of the Buddha who

was

um trying to to kill him according to

the text so that he could take over the

Sangha

um he's like in the bottom pits of

Avicii hell right now but he is destined

to become a a checker Buddha in some

future age according to tradition and so

even though he was on his way to hell at the time you know just going with you know time getting shorter and shorter up until he becomes a Pacheco Buddha then he's uh you know no matter what he does I guess maybe I shouldn't say that but uh you know he is he's getting closer to enlightenment but um making spiritual progress It's just of a different order in the west if you're living as a layperson your spiritual practice is more a matter of accepting what happens with with Equanimity I mean you do that as a monk also and um just learning how to to interact with people wisely whereas as a monk you can

just go off and be a Hermit pretty much
so it's a different sort of spiritual
practice and I did I mean I I kept
feeling this need that I really needed
to interact with humans more especially
people that speak my own language that
um you know have the same approximate
cultural conditioning to me

so

is achieving Enlightenment easier in
this cultural environment being a late
is damn difficult no matter what
cultural environment you're in
really

it's hard to say

although as I say the monks live was
designed for

um cultivating like the more subtle
levels of wisdom you know you can get to
a level of subtlety you're living alone
in a cave in silence and Stillness you
can get into really subtle mental States
and

um that's one reason why Jonna is much
less of an option for laypeople than it
is for monks simply because they can
just dedicate themselves to it full time
yeah

so this question is kind of uh
uh indeterminate it's it's hard to say
exactly although

um yeah my mental States aren't as
subtle as they were before but I'm

dealing with I'm still dealing with
things that have to be worked out and uh
they're coming at me at a higher rate so
at that I mean to that extent
um you could make quicker progress just
being thrown into the Maelstrom of of
some saric phenomena rather than hiding
in a forest somewhere although def as
like I pointed out I mean the Buddha
advised
monks to hide out in a forest somewhere
so it's not like they're just chickening
out and running away I mean you have to
deal with [__] no matter what where you
are
because your own problems come with you
because uh they're they're inside you

so let's move on to the next question

this is from Matthew

do modern Buddhists have a theory on

what the historical Jesus was of course

he came from a Jewish lineage but could

he have been a yogi also well there are

a few texts there's one Tibetan one I've

read the translation of it and it's

obviously just a just a Shameless

forgery

and I assume all of them are but there

are these um

Traditions that Jesus during his his

Missing Years

that uh he actually went to India or

Tibet and uh was like ordained as a

Buddhist monk and then came back to

Judea or uh

what was it

north of Judea Galilee

you know after after you've been a monk

but it was I mean I read this this one A

friend of mine a Burmese friend of mine

a Burmese monk friend

he actually had the thing published

and I'm just pointing out to him I mean

there's just no way that Jesus I mean as

a kid they're offering to make him a

high priest in the of the temple in

Jerusalem and he says no I'm just going

to go off and go off to the East and

study and then he he goes to the East

and he has this name jivita karita or

something like that which is obviously
just the closest Sanskrit or or Nepali
or whatever to Jesus Christ as though
Christ were his last name you know Jesus
H Christ

so yeah modern Buddhist I mean they've
got Fringe theories that that are not
mainstream and most Buddhists don't
follow

um you know it's not like in Islam where
you know Jesus although he's not
worshiped is accepted as a genuine
Prophet I mean there's none of that in
in Buddhism with regard to people in in
the west like like Jesus or Moses
or Muhammad

so

do modern Buddhists have a theory on
what the historical Jesus was uh I think
that the correctest answer to that is no
and uh could he have been a yogi
um well

if he was a yogi then he was a yogi like
under John the Baptist see my take on
Jesus you know he started off as a
carpenter those the so-called missing
years are just he wasn't famous yet you
know they had some legends about when he
was a kid which are probably made up in
my opinion not being a like a a Biblical
fundamentalist obviously
and um

and then there's this Missing Years I

mean after they take care of the baby stuff it's sort of the same thing with the Buddhist Story I mean the Buddha you know they have to discuss his birth and you know this sort of miraculous stuff associated with his birth and then you know it's pretty much silence up until you know he's he's right about ready to renounce the world and it's the same way with Jesus in the New Testament um but he was a carpenter he was more spiritual I mean it wasn't satisfying him for for whatever reasons you know he just had this deep spiritual yearning so he heard about John the Baptist and went and joined John the Baptist's spiritual

camp on the on the Jordan River
and there may have been yogic practices
of A Sort like as seen Jewish yogic
practices could be that the essenes were
influenced by Buddhism in in certain
ways that can't be proven
but um yeah if he was a yogi he was a
Jewish Yogi like studying under his Guru
John the Baptist and then after John the
Baptist got arrested
um the the theory is that Jesus was his
successor the sort of leader of the
group but he wasn't satisfied with
staying in a camp you know out in the
desert and so he figured he'd better
just go in and deal with humans kind of
like I did although of course I'm I'm no

Messiah

so the next question let's just move on
to that the next question is from Tut
DVD

and Tut DVD says have you found any
support systems for aiding Buddhists who
may want to disrobe perhaps one can be
established I'd Foster a monk in
transition drive them around and give
them a place to stay help find a job and
establish credit Etc take them to the
strip club I kid

I'm sure many other people would do the
same yeah that's that's a good idea and
it is true that um if you've been a monk
for a long time and you don't have a

family to fall back on like a lot of people do

I mean the the usual support system for a monk who's dropping out is his family or some woman that that loves him and you know she's she's completely okay with him dropping out and like moving in with her or something

um

but yeah there's there's no real support system other than supports I should say supporters also

so the family supporters or you know one woman in particular tend to be the three main ones

and uh you know like uh when uh Conti Paolo the famous Conte Paulo who

um met uh what was his name Thomas

Merton in Thailand and then moved to

Australia

um

he was supported by his his supporters I

mean when he dropped out a lot of his

supporters just they were they were cool

with that and they helped him to to get

set up as a layperson I was helped to a

large degree by uh I mean my family is

pretty much gone you know my parents

have passed away I didn't have that to

fall back on and uh yeah I just had to

rely on supporters

hmm

and uh yeah they provided me with uh

several thousand dollars to get started
on and with that that was just
invaluable

so I mean if a monk I mean a lot of
monks they just really are stuck like
Burmese monks that have been monks since
childhood they don't know how to do
anything else you know they're not
familiar with anything else
uh they and so I mean they're just stay
as monks even though they're not making
progress or maybe not even trying to
make progress

um

there was one I I this one story I read
in a Jack Cornfield book a long time ago
how uh there was a monk at a it was like

a refugee Center in Thailand he was a
Burmese monk or a Corinne monk or
something and there was this sort of a
refugee camp for
you know corens or something it was
during the one of the Civil War
flare-ups in Burma with corens in the
military government
and he's he's there at this refugee camp
and this Thai woman and he started
getting like emotionally close
and
um he just like deep down realized I
mean he didn't know how to do anything
other than be a monk and so he was going
to just he got this weird idea he was

going to emulate himself on the the
front front porch of the the Burmese
Embassy in Thailand and then it was
mainly just because he was in this state
of you know he he wants this woman he
wants to drop out but he can't because
he just completely unfamiliar with being
a layperson having a having a job and
all that but somebody talked him out of
it and uh the the Thai lady kind of
backed away and
apparently he's still a monk if he's
still alive
so yeah I mean if you want to start up
something like that
um it probably would be a good service
although it may be that a lot of uh

Asian monks who are just eager to get to America and start being rich or something or just exploit that but I mean if there's any monk that you know of who admits that he's thinking about seriously thinking about dropping out of the monk Hood

um yeah I mean helping him would be a very

um a very good thing to do I mean I was going to say a meritorious and just from the Orthodox point of view helping a monk to drop out may not be all that meritorious still I mean if he's just not I mean he just got what he can get out of being a monk or whatever

then it's better for him not to be a
monk than for him to be an unwilling
prisoner in a monastery

kind of in Exile from the world because
he just can't make his way back again
so yeah if you I mean rather than just
set up a fund I mean like and just
advertise it you know any monks that
feel like they should disrobe you know
contact us at this number

um just I mean just keep your eyes open
and if any monk that you support
you know is talking about he's seriously
considering disrobing you might reach
out to him and offer him some help I'm
sure he would very much appreciate that
so we'll just move on to the next

question this is from Austin

foreign

says can you do a video on your thoughts
of nagarjuna

um I suppose I could

um I've I've already pretty much given
my opinion on nagarjan I think he is one
of the greatest Buddhist philosophers of
all time

I had a Korean Mahayana monk tell me
that uh

in in his circles Korean Mahayana monk
circles nagarjuna is considered to be
pretty much a second Buddha

and I do think that non-guardian is
interpretation of penicious or dependent

co-rising is the best that I've come
across

and I won't I won't wade into that one
because that that's a whole that's a
whole video and on it in and of itself
and that's kind of what Austin here
suggested can you do a video on your
thoughts of nagarjuna so yeah that's a
possibility other than what I've what
I've just said

um yeah it's possible I'm not making any
promises though

so the next question from Austin

can we have a discussion on why Brian is
pro-hitler

yeah poor Brian man

I think

some like Advanced Jewish rabbi might have put a curse on him you know way way more efficacious than the curse they put on Spinoza where they're trying to get him torn apart by bears or something because Brian is just he's just persecuted at every step you know he's he lost his his job you know as a mainstream Dharma teacher because he's supposedly uh you know like a anti-semite Nazi Holocaust denier and you know he's he got kicked out of his apartment probably for similar reasons had to had to move somewhere else just most recently just a couple days ago he called me when I was at work

and told me that um the videos we've
been doing with anjan uh punadamo which
I've enjoyed is they're they're really
nice

um

uh participated in one of Brian's UFO
meetup groups

and then he put out on his social media
you know he encouraged his followers to
check on it and he just got this wave of
negative feedback about what he's

associating with the Nazi and uh so I
guess

is at least for the for the for a while
going to stop doing the videos with um
Brian and me

and so it's just Brian just can't get a

break it's it's really strange too

though because he is a sincere

knowledgeable Buddhist

you know I mean he he doesn't promote

hatred he doesn't promote violence

and but the question is why is he Pro

Hitler

um what got him interested in in the

first place I don't know he says that he

has this feeling that in his previous

life he was like a whop of pilot you

know he was a Nazi in his previous life

before this one and if that's the case

then that may have something to do with

it I would assume so

but um he really sincerely believes that

Adolf Hitler was a good guy he was the
good guy he was wearing the white hat
and that it was you know International
Jewish something

um just the just the The Establishment
the proto-new world order

that um because he was breaking away
from you know sort of the the economic
Network and of course he was no fan of
Jews

um that you know he was threatening to
break away just sort of like uh in
modern times there have been some people
that just because they're trying to get
away from the globalized currency scam
essentially

or you know they're just trying to go

back to the gold standard or with their own currency and that sort of thing they just get they just get brutally attacked and so Brian thinks that sort of thing happened with Hitler and that all the death camps and gas Chambers and so forth are just uh propaganda and

um I mean there have been revisionists including Jewish religions like David Cole who I mean they don't deny that the Holocaust happened but they're saying you know it was exaggerated that there are details that are just accepted you know with regard to like certain death camps or gas Chambers and that sort of

thing that were they're just sort of
like embellishments on the truth
and uh you know it might be more like
three million instead of 6 million that
that were systematically killed
but

so Brian just thinks that um I mean I I
do not endorse Brian's

um opinions on on certain things

but uh I don't see how Hitler was any
worse than Stalin I mean this is just
the weirdness of Western culture and
there is a lot of propaganda and mind
control in that you can wear a shake
weavara shirt you could probably wear a
MAO shirt in public even though Mal
killed more people than Stalin and

Hitler combined

and it's it's okay but you are a

swastika or a Hitler shirt and you're

just gonna be like spat on and screamed

at in the streets just like Brian gets

so

yeah he he just sincerely believes it uh

the Holocaust didn't happen that the

Jews that were killed you know during

the 1930s and first half of the 40s

um you know it was done without Hitler's

approval or or knowledge and to some

degree some of that must have happened

and also that like a lot of the ones in

in Ukraine when they got liberated when

Ukraine well invaded by the by the

Germans

um

most of like the commissars and stuff in
in the Soviet Union in the earlier
decades were Jewish you know it was a
Jewish guy in charge of overseeing the
whole of demore which was like a
holocaust that most people have never
even heard of

it was where the ukrainians were just
deliberately starved to death by the
Millions

and uh so there was a lot of like people
in Russia or the Ukraine in the Soviet
Union that as soon as they got the
chance they were just fighting back
against the the Jews and persecuting

them and so forth so I mean some of that
did happen

I mean I I still think that a lot of
Jews were just taken out into fields and
shot with machine guns after being
required to dig their own trench Graves
and that sort of thing so I'm not saying
that that Hitler was uh a good guy but
he was a damn interesting dude I'd
rather I'd rather have dinner with Adolf
Hitler than with Joseph Stalin at least
I'd have uh more confidence that I'd be
able to walk out of the room alive
afterwards
but uh

why Brian is pro-hill I mean if you

really want to know his his reasons I
think you'd have to ask Brian because
I've just told pretty much as much as I
understand of it

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from Jules katard

Jules katard

probably got picked on a lot when he was
a kid

and Jules guitar it says

I remember hearing a discourse where a
story was told of a frog overhearing a
discourse of the Buddha I don't remember
all the details but when the Frog passed
away

it was then reborn as a human or maybe a
Deva as a result of hearing this

discourse can anybody point me in the direction of the discourse of the I mean of the source of the story or any others involving animals who overheard discourses and gained higher rebirth attainments Etc thank you

okay well

um the story that he's referring to about the frog is uh the manduka Deva manduka is is poly for frog and Deva is God the frog god and the closest that comes to being canonical is it is in the Melinda partner

it is mentioned there I'm pretty sure and the Melinda pagna is generally not considered to be part of the tapitica it

is rather late

um but it is it is part of the 40 volume

Burmese typical the Burmese considered

to be canonical so that would be the

closest to being canonical it is I think

it's also mentioned in the wisudi Maga

and a few other commentaries

and uh

so is this I mean the story that that

Jules guitar is referring to about the

frog is that the Buddha was giving a

discourse on the banks of Lake gagara I

think

and uh there's people were just sitting

here standing around listening to the

sermon

and a Frog happened to be just within

earshot of the discourse and the Buddha had such a soothing melodious kind of a voice that the Frog was just listening and it was sort of like in this almost like a meditation you know it was just like in this peaceful State listening to the Buddha's voice when a cow heard or maybe a Shepherd a coward I think with the with the stick just what went up to to listen to the Buddha too and he just accidentally brought a stick down on the head of the Frog and killed it without any intention the Frog was killed instantly and because it died in this kind of exalted State listening to the Buddha's voice it became a Deva in its

next life it's uh according according to
the tradition it was reborn in palatimsa
heaven

and how to polish 12 yojinas across and
a yojana is uh very roughly 10 miles
so it's it's living in a palace it's uh
man over 100 miles wide

but um let's see what is it

let's see having I I got some notes Here

I cut and paste this note here see

having discovered his previous birth he

appeared before the Buddha revealed his

identity and worshiped him the Buddha

preached to him and the Deva became a

sodapana 84 000 others also realize the

truth

so I guess uh he remembered his past

life as a frog and then when he met with
the Buddha during possibly when the
Buddha was up in tawatims to heaven or
maybe the Frog came down to pay his
respects he told him about the incident
and the Buddha preached to him and the
Frog God who apparently was in human
form as a god even though he was in frog
form as a frog

um

he uh he became an Arya he became a
pseudopod

which is nice

but any other stories about animals

hearing discourses and uh getting

attainance from that I don't know of

there are a lot of animals that that did
do meritorious deeds and got to be
reborn as humans or Gods like you just
read the Jataka stories you know it was
just full of you know just fish and
frogs and crabs and pheasants and
peacocks and foxes and so forth with
essentially human intelligence like the
the Buddha in a previous life he's the
fish King who uses essentially psychic
powers to cause it to rain so that his
his pond which was drying out in a
drought wouldn't dry out and all of his
his subject fish Wouldn't Die
and there's there's a famous uh Jataka
where the Buddha was a a quail a baby
quail in a previous life who uh is

caught in a forest fire and uh he just essentially uses psychic powers or he makes a an assertion of Truth and I don't remember exactly what the assertion of Truth was but um you know what what truth it was he was asserting but and then you know the coil makes this vow you know by the the power of this truth made the the forest fire not burn us up and uh the forest fires kind of went around the The Forest Part or the baby quail and his family was living so there's lots of that kind of thing especially in the Angelica stories uh

but with regard to animals actually
getting attainments from hearing the
Buddha that's the only one I can
remember there was a monkey and an
elephant they were attending the Buddha
in uh well he was in seclusion the monks
were all squabbling about something so
he just took off and lived alone in the
woods and the monkey and an elephant
were were taking care of him
and you know offering him food and that
kind of a thing so I they might be in
heaven too but it wasn't because the
Buddha was preaching to them probably
so I think I'll just uh move on to the
next question
excuse me

and this is from hey it's Tig

and hey it's TIG says in your question

and answer 36

as a response to Aaron's question

regarding sex scandals in Eastern

religions you were relaying anecdotes

regarding prostitutes in Asia at the one

hour 21 minutes 12 seconds time stamp

you are about to tell another story

before the bashful look on your face you

opted out of it can you please tell that

story to us I must know I have to know

so my nose itches so

ah

excuse me yeah okay well I I can tell

I remember

this is back in the 90s late 90s Maybe
maybe early

whatever the decade after the 90s is
called

I was living at this Forest Monastery up
in the hills the one I almost became
habit of

and uh for some reason the the current
Abbott at the time just happened to me
we were having a conversation and just
for some reason I don't remember why he
just said sort of dismissively Village
girls aren't very pretty and then I'm
like well what about that one and there
was this there was this house like two
houses away from the monster when we
first started going for alms it was one

of the first houses that would offer
alms and there was this girl there he
was maybe 18 20 years old maybe early
20s

and she was she was pretty I mean she
was Buxom you know curvy which is kind
of unusual for a Southeast Asian girl
and she had like this delicate

like a porcelain doll kind of a face
almost like her face was just painted
onto the shell of an egg

and she had I mean she obviously had a
foul disposition you know sometimes
you're walking towards the house you can
hear like angrily scolding her parents
and so forth but um you know I just said

well what about that one and I explained
which one I was talking about and he
said the Australian monk who lived here
last year said the same thing about her
but um

yeah Western men have different
standards of beauty than than Burmese
men and then he starts telling me this
Horror Story about this this same girl
um

apparently trying to maybe he was just
indulging in gossip but maybe he was
like trying to conscientiously get me
not to like her or something just not be
attracted to her

um he was saying that when she was
engaged to be married before she was

married she was actually going to her
fiance's house to have sex
I mean it was her idea
and uh I mean by Burmese Village
standards that's all right she's already
a Scarlet hussy then apparently uh the
girl's father didn't like the guy they
didn't stay married for very long they
got divorced or whatever which is fairly
easy in Burma even though it might not
happen nearly as much as in the west and
then she started having like intimate
rendezvous with a farmhand that lived
down the road they would meet under a
bush and have intimate relations I mean
without being married at all there was

no intention of being married apparently
and not only that but on one occasion
she climbed up a neighbor's tree and
stole a whole basket of fruit
and while he's telling me this I'm
LinkedIn I don't think I ever went out
with a girl that wasn't any worse than
that I mean I mean she's practically a
saint or something by Western standards
if that's the worst he could say about
her

um and then but then later on like years
later he was telling me that she
actually this this girl but because I
mean relatively speaking she was a
Scarlet hussy you know by Burmese you
know mainstream rural Village standards

um she actually did become a prostitute
there was an Army base nearby and uh the
soldiers there liked her apparently
but um that was the story I almost told
I'm pretty sure
and uh yeah I think of anything it made
me like her more I mean not her becoming
a prostitute years later but at the time
he was telling me all this
scandalous gossip about her it's like
that's it I mean she's
yeah I just didn't get it by Western
standards I mean that I mean that's just
nothing
so I'll just move on to the next next
story next question this is from rafi46

and Rafi 46 says have you ever heard of monks in Burma inciting hatred against Christians there

uh I think the easiest answer to that would be no

I can't think of it might have happened it may be that I just don't remember it but I don't think monks incite hatred against Christians there I mean there is sort of uh like in The Villages in The Villages especially there might be a few Christians

and uh other people might disapprove you know they're Christians did you know that they're Christians that kind of a thing but um yeah I never heard monks bad-mouthing Christians I've heard a few

lay people you know kind of disapproving
of some neighbor because they're a
Christian

but um as a general Christians don't
have as bad of a reputation as as
Muslims do obviously in Burma there are
monks who are not necessarily inciting
hatred against Muslims but they're
definitely not wanting them in the
country

you know just live in peace you know
somewhere else

just stay away from us in our Burmese
Buddhist culture

so

yeah I don't think monkson I mean there

probably are there probably are monks in
Burma who incite hatred against
Christians but I've it's it's not nearly
as common as uh being anti-islamic and
in Rangoon there's Christmas carolers
Christians you know there are more of
them in the cities
and they'll go out Christmas caroling
and before Christmas you know just stand
outside of gates and
seeing Mary Mary do you do you all
that kind of a thing
so I'll just uh move on to the next
question and uh
lots of questions not even funny
this is from akala or achala let's go
with achala let's assume this is a poly

word a challoh

and inshallah says a person who has
become a sodapana does he know he has
achieved the state of assadapana if yes
how what are the signs

well this is like a trick question for
me this is like an academic question
because I really think that the meaning
of the word soda Palmer has changed
over the over the centuries
that originally a sodapona would be sort
of like the Buddhist equivalent of a
born-again Christian I mean it's like
probably originally a sodapon or someone
who enters the stream they're just
entering upon a spiritual life you know

they're they're like filled with faith
and enthusiastic about practicing Dharma
but

um somewhere along the line it became it
got turned into uh essentially a
superhuman state where they are an arya
they're a Buddhist saint that has

um

contained at least a glimpse of nibbana
and they can't tell lies anymore they
can't break any of the five precepts
anymore

um

but uh so this is kind of a an academic
question for me I'll ask it again here a
person who has become a setu on it does
he know he has achieved the state

episode upon if yes how what it signs
well it all depends on exactly what a
soda planet is and it depends a lot on
who you talk to because like there's uh
a Mahayana Buddhist text the The Diamond
Cutter Sutra the vajra charya
and um it says that if you're if you
become an arya there's no way you would
think that you're an Arya because you've
transcended the view of self of I am
this or I am that
so if you follow that then they wouldn't
really know or if they know that they've
achieved the state episode upon it's
some deep down experiential knowledge
rather than I am this or I am that

but the signs of I'm not the signs of
being a sodapana

um

yeah it's it again it depends on exactly
what the definition is and I really am
skeptical of the official

Orthodox interpretation of a stream

enterer but as I set up the Orthodox

explanation of a street Mentor you know

they just cannot break the five precepts

anymore and uh there are certain beliefs

like self-view that they have abandoned

so that those would be the signs I

suppose

I think I'll just move on to achala or

yeah let's just let's call this person

achala

achala's next question

why should we bow down to the Buddha

statue Buddha is extinguished so why

bowing down to an empty statue well

I agree with that

as a monk I for the most part I did not

bow down the statues

which could be a little awkward because

all the Burmese monks would be you know

they'd be prostrating and I'd just be

sitting there

and some of them wouldn't be kind of

looking up at me like why isn't he doing

it

but I explained to them sometimes I mean

it's like a Buddha statue has no Sila no

samadhi no punya you know it has no
virtue no morality it's got no
concentration or meditation unless a
brick does and it's got no wisdom unless
unless a brick does

so it's it's just uh an image you know
it's just a representative of the Buddha
and so people that are very devotional
you know they're very grateful to the
Buddha you know they'll bow down out of
respect you know it's like the Buddha
isn't here so we'll bow down to this as
his representative

but again

um

idolatry has really never been a big
thing for me I mean I've never been much

of an idolater I've got a Buddha statues
here like that little white one on top
of the bookcase there
that one there the unorthodox sleepy one
but um I have probably bouted that one
before

I don't I've never bounded this one
I've had that one for years I got it in
Burma and I was amongst some some
Village person gave it to me
so yeah I mean I agree I'm not into
idolatry it's not really why I became a
Buddha I'm not very devotionalistic
so yeah

why should we bow down to the blue side
I mean it depends on you it depends on

your volitions

but it's not really necessary there were

no Buddha statues in the Buddhist time

obviously I mean it was hundreds of

years before they got invented

so we'll just move on to each other's

next question

why all the Buddhas are born in India

all the samasam Buddhas we have in Pali

Canon were born in India why not Uganda

or some other country

well

this is uh a little problematic

um all the sumossum Buddhas we have in

the Pali Canon were born into

a culture resembling India although once

you get more than just a few

a few Buddhas back they're born on
previous worlds so it'd be previous
India's or previous Jambu deepas but the
thing is in Ancient India they had a
very limited understanding of geography
World Geography they had four continents
with mountain marrow in the center they
had a northern continent and eastern and
western continents in the southern
continent Jambu Deepa was the southern
continent that was like the subcontinent
of India with Mount marrow being up in
the Himalayas
and I mean they had to know that there
were people farther west but they
figured that was just sort of an

extension on Jambu Depot that the other
three continents were inhabited by
non-humans I mean they were like
Monsters like it was like nagas or
something on one of them yakas or
something on another one
so yeah it was just the limitations of
their understanding obviously they had
no idea of Uganda
so and to some degree it's just the
limitations of their understanding of I
mean it's just ancient India it's kind
of the same they were they were
india-centric just sort of like the way
the the Jews and the Christians are
earth-centric you know they just
consider the the the

almighty God is going to have his only
begotten son on this little planet you
know

so it's it's kind of that sort of a
thing

but uh I don't know

I don't think there have ever been a
Buddha in Uganda maybe enlightened
beings

so I'll just move on to the next
question the Arya swasti project says
greetings Ponyo I was recently watching
anjan punadama when he said something
interesting he said the past is not real
because it is no longer here the future
is not real because it's not here yet

and the present is not real because you cannot count on it

I can understand the concept but this brings a question of cause and effect or Karma comma in the past if the past is not real where did the cause come from if the future is not real where does the effect go neither cause nor effect seems to be happening in the now at any time much respect or regards well

I mean this this statement that he says that oh John Punit almost said the past is not real because it's no longer here the future is not real because it's not here yet the present is not real because you cannot count on it

um I'm not sure if that is orthodox Tara
bottom with regard to the present I
pretty sure an orthodox terrible the
present is real but only the present the
past no longer exists the future doesn't
exist yet so it's like a Newtonian
concept of time

um it does kind of remind me what the
the ajan is said to have said reminds me
of a statement from Mahayana text
whereas

um this is essentially past mind cannot
be grasped present not mind cannot be
grasped future mind cannot be grasped
so that would be something like the
president is not real because you cannot

count on it but according to Orthodox
terravala only the present moment is
real and the thing is the present moment
is is changing so it's like
the past
um you know it it was real when it was
the present it was real
and this this attitude I mean it does
create a philosophical question I mean
in abhidham especially I I have no idea
how they can get cause and effect to
work because they've got everything
according to abhidham a philosophy which
is orthodox taravana everything in the
world is blinking off and on at a rate
of about a trillion times a second so
each each moment is like a trillionth of

a second and it's it's there and then it disappears and the next thing is there and that disappears and the next thing is there and that disappears and so how can you have cause and effect from the past

it doesn't even there's not even contiguity I mean it's not even touching because you know you've got the past moment completely vanishes and then you got the next moment after that so that anything that any cause even in the the previous moment is just a non-existent cause because the past doesn't exist so I mean if you can admit there's some kind of contiguity that is it's it's it

removes most of the problem because you know it's just continuous it's like like like my arm here it's like you know this causes the the next part causes the next part because it's all contiguous you can say that it it's cause and effect but I mean obviously it isn't but still at least they're contiguous and it's you know if if time is moving like this then you know at least it's just a constant flow

and then you could have some sort of cause and effect although using my arm as a representation of time is maybe not the most uh intuitively effective way of going about it

so yeah it's just a flow and and it's

like what was

of the present moment isn't the present anymore and what what isn't the present yet is going to be the present so I mean it's not like you know only now is real and now now it isn't real because it's a different now you know it's just now the present moment is is just in a state of of flow

and I don't know if I answered the Arya swasti Project's question

but I tried

and I got a bunch more so I'll just move on to the next question and this is from bodhisatta 969

Alias the fascist Buddhist

says do you think fascism or forms of government similar to Fascism fit with Buddhism

if you look at Buddhist countries like Thailand or Myanmar you might come to this conclusion in addition they would never allow themselves to be overwhelmed or give up their culture on their own I believe democracy is the rule of the ignorant and selfish and usually leads to the downfall of One's Own culture I also think that even the Dalai Lama would not Advocate unlimited Mass immigration like Pope Francis is doing kind regards well I mean even just going back you know into the Buddhist time

most of the most of the government
systems in the Buddhist time were pretty
much fascist I mean it was like
totalitarian autocracy
you know the King was the Law whatever
he wanted to do he could do he wanted to
you know kill kill whoever for whatever
reason nobody was going to stop him
unless it was some other king that waged
war against him
so yeah I guess fascism fits with
Buddhism because
most Buddhist countries in the past
uh the least smacked of fascism a bit
you know you got autocratic Kings
nationalism obviously is is fascistic

um there is a certain amount of free enterprise in fascism but it's under the control of the government at least under the close supervision of the government so that if they step out of line you know they are corrected

so to speak

so yeah I don't see that there's any problem with that I think the Buddha did prefer a certain kind of democracy at least uh in in the Sangha that he based um the Democracy of the Buddhist Sangha on a kind of oligarchic democracy in I think it was the vajians I can't remember the country that it was this the

malas of the vajians I think

there was in the Buddhist time it was
like

what was could be called democracy was
gradually being replaced by uh Kings and
and like Empires you know Kings were
just centrally

um you know just like very centralized
rule autocratic Rule and then they were
like expanding and there's lots of Wars
for for territory in the Buddhist time
although he did prefer a kind of
democracy but you got to bear in mind
that democracy in ancient times or even
democracy

um at the time of the American founding
fathers or you know ancient ancient

Athens or ancient Rome the Roman Republic before it became an Empire it was very different from democracy now I mean first of all only male citizens who owned a certain amount of property were allowed to vote that was the Democracy that women weren't allowed to vote lower class people like like Street Beggars weren't allowed to vote and that makes sense I mean I mean it makes it way better sense I mean once you've got people on welfare on like a government Dole voting that's it because they're just gonna vote for for free stuff and it's it's somewhat similar with women it's like you got all these like liberated single women now liberated in

quotes

that um you know they don't need no man
they just want to marry the government
and have the government support them and
again it's the same sort of thing it's
just it ruins democracy that way but
when you've got like relatively educated
people who really have a vested interest
in their country being strong
then

democracy can be strong that way but
then eventually sooner or later it just
goes into decline it somehow has the
seeds of its own decadence incorporated
into its beginning
but just as a short answer to this uh

yeah fascism is it's compatible with
Buddhism partly because Buddhism is is a
political you know and they've they've
had Psychopathic Kings from the very
beginning like the list of 10 dangers
there's a standardized list of 10
dangers in in the polytexts like 10
dangers that are
um legitimate reasons to abbreviate a
ceremony to to make it shorter you know
like the the party mocha ceremony number
one on the list is Kings
and that's not only foreign Kings Waging
War you know sending an army you got
like an alien or a like a foreign army
invading I mean it's the king of your
own country is a danger too because he

can do whatever he wants and he's not necessarily a good guy people who can do whatever they want tend to become corrupted and not so not so nice foreign

so yeah history has shown that uh something along the lines of fascism or at least totalitarian dictatorship um are are compatible with Buddhism much more compatible than like Marxism first of all Marxism is atheistic they're they're anti-any religion other than the atheistic religion of Marxism and also communism wants everyone equal so they're not they're not going to smile upon uh you know exalted holy men

anything like that

so yeah fascism is more compatible with

Buddhism than uh Marxism is or communism

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from weird Flex

word Flex weird Flex I think and a weird

Flex says what was your conversion

experience like when did it stop being

about investigating Buddhism and instead

become about practicing

this is kind of a tricky question

because I didn't have just one

conversion experience like

converting me to terravana Buddhism I

had like three I mean first I was like

17 years old

and I was just going wild I was just in

Rebellion against the system because I
once you reach a certain age or at least
in my case I realized the adults were
just as messed up as I was it's like
when you're a kid a little kid you just
assume that adults have it figured out
they know what's what
and you don't know what's what yet
because you're just not grown up yet but
then around the age of 13 or so I was
starting to get skeptical and by 16 it
was just plainly obvious that the adults
are just as [__] up as I was and uh so
I just went into open Rebellion and uh
when the 16 or 17 year old goes into
open Rebellion it often doesn't turn out

very well because of course when you're a teenager uh you don't understand things nearly as well as you actually do I mean I was correct in assuming that the adults were just as messed up as I was but um

um just finding your own way just like don't do anything you don't want to do and then just like party and skip school and get into all kinds of trouble it wasn't working out and so my father in a towering rage one night

insisted that I was going to have to uh see a youth counselor or just like hit the road

and so I saw the youth counselor and it was kind of like a stage of Crisis you

know it's like things aren't working you
know it's like
my old ways of dealing with things just
weren't
able to to deal with the situation so I
was like in this crisis and it turned
out that the youth counselor was a
spiritual guy he was a cool guy and
started giving me like ROM dos books to
read and so forth and then it was like
it just kind of clicked you know reading
ROM dogs I couldn't even really
understand it very well because the
concepts were so alien to anything I've
been exposed to you know when you're 16
17 years old reading a ROM dos book and

he's talking about you know Eastern
philosophy and Hinduism mainly also some
Buddhism and

um you know it's just you don't have
anything to really integrate it with so
it's just kind of loose in there and I
wasn't able to really grasp it very well
but intuitively I could just feel that
you know there's something to this I
mean he's this guy obviously understands
things better than I do

and so that was like my first conversion
experience was

just as a teenager

um I think my conversion to Buddhism in
general occurred when I read Zen flash
Zen bones compiled by Paul reps which is

well worth the reading

and um

in that case it was like Zen like

reading the Zen Koons and so forth it

was just

um

this feeling of being comfortable with

just having no Solid Ground under your

feet

you know it's just like not depending on

anything not even anything that's

necessarily making sense

and just deep down again intuitively

that that appealed to me

and so I was about 19 I think it was uh

like a freshman or Junior in college

when I read that book and so I mean I
was already pretty much converted I was
just kind of searching for for some kind
of Eastern philosophy especially that
appealed to me most
and Zen Buddhism really appealed to me
and then I think
what converted me to teravata was
reading
and this is this old translation of the
suttony Potter I think it was my Faust
Bowl

I mean he this is like
1890s it was uh I think it was part of
Max Muller's sacred books of the
E-Series
and it was the Attica Wagga in

particular which was similar to Zen

it was just very

I mean it just pulls away all the ground

from underneath you you just uh not

necessarily in free fall but it just

kind of makes you not dependent on

anything

and that appealed to me also so it was

then that

um I started I started being really

attracted to terravonna Buddhism

and I wasn't fully persuaded I was still

open-minded to becoming a Zen monk or a

terravada monk until I went out and

looked at a Zen Monastery and the

terravala monastery both in California

and um the Terra bottom one obviously
came closer to what the Buddha was was
uh originally teaching
so I went with taravada
and uh let's see when did it stop being
about investigation Buddha of Buddhism
and instead becoming about practicing
uh I didn't really become serious
practitioner of Buddhism until I became
a monk or right before I became a monk
because you know people would ask me if
I was a Buddhist before I was a monk and
I'd say well not really because I wasn't
even giving five precepts I was drinking
beer in particular
and so it's I because of that I wouldn't
even consider myself to be a Buddhist I

was more of a Buddhism Enthusiast you
know I was aspiring to be a Buddhist
someday so it wasn't until I really
became a monk that I considered myself
to become a Buddhist
because I was actually walking the walk
at the time

so we'll just move on to the next
question this is from rui

and rui says hello Ponyo how was your
experience particularly in the jungle
with the ceaseless inner movie

projection how proficient did you get it
replacing on wholesome formations with
wholesome formations and thoughts

well it wasn't ceaseless inner movie

projection although I mean there have been many meditation sets you're sitting there cross-legged and I mean it's just you've got like a movie playing in your head some I mean sometimes it'd be like a porn movie

and uh yeah I mean it's like you really have to practice a lot but I mean eventually it got to the point where if I was sitting in meditation I mean there was it wasn't even replacing unwholesome formations with wholesome ones it was just emptying everything out just sitting there empty

Which is far superior to sort of the makeshift of replacing a wholesome thought with a wholesome one because

it's still thought you know you're still
just at the level of perception in some
sorrow you're at a more wholesome level
of some sorrow but

um I mean you're trying to detach
yourself

from samsara and so I mean eventually as
your meditation gets better

you're going to be getting into more and
more subtle mental States into your like
approximating just

emptiness

and The Emptiness is is full in a

paradoxical way it's not like just blank
nothing

you know like uh in quantum physics you

know empty space contains zero energy
and infinite energy

but uh I mean you just live a wholesome
simple lifestyle and your mind becomes
more wholesome and simple you know
you're just living out in the forest and
you know you meditate and you you walk
for alms and you chop wood and carry
water and so forth still you're gonna be
having naughty thoughts and just wake up
in the morning with some rock and roll
song from the 80s blasting in your head
and that kind of a thing

but um

see how proficient did I get

well I didn't completely Master it I
don't think you I mean you know it's

sort of like the anata again where you
cannot say with regard to your
perceptions or or regard to anything let
it be this way let it not be that way
and consistently have it happen so

um

yeah I mean you still this this is going
to be [__] arising and I mean you can
catch it immediately if you're being
very mindful but uh being very mindful
is not not

um

I mean it's not very realistic for most
people

so let's see yeah the best way to uh
deal with the ceaseless inner movie

projection

is just simplify and make your life more

wholesome and get away from the uh the

outer movie projections

and things do improve

and then eventually you get to the point

where you can sit there for hours or

maybe even go for days without without

any

crap you know without just getting lost

it's wandering off into the crap

so I'll just move on to rui's next

question

do you consider Sada or faith sufficient

for stream entry and again we got this

academic problematic issue of what

exactly is stream entry is it what I

think it is or is it something else or
you know is it what Orthodox tradition
says it is

and uh

yeah I don't think Sada would be
sufficient for gaining a glimpse of
nibana

I don't think just that in and of itself
there would have to be something else
combined with that either practice or
just getting some crisis slammed onto
you is getting beaten over the head with
some kind of Crisis that you cannot cope
with in in the usual way and uh

yeah

so I I think regardless of the

definition I don't think that faith in
and of itself is sufficient
for becoming an arya or you know gaining
your first glimpse of enlightenment
or or really maybe if we go back to what
I consider stream entry to have
originally met which is sort of like
being born again modest you know it's
just like you're just filled with faith
and and you know you're really gung-ho
and you're just entering the spiritual
life you know you're a dharmic life for
the first time then possibly such I
would be sufficient but even then
probably just Sada in and of itself even
though it would be like a a key
ingredient I don't think that would be

sufficient I mean there'd still have to
be some kind of uh I don't know some
kind of self-discipline or morality or
something involved
or just pondering the truth you know
just considering what you've heard
anything like that so yeah I don't think
so that would be sufficient
so I'm just gonna move on to the next
question this is from Francois or
possibly uh Francois
and Francois says Hi panyabasa in your
next q a can you please comment on the
YouTube videos teachings of Aja
nyanamoli Terra of the hillside
Hermitage

well the problem with that is I have no
idea who are John yanamoli Terra is of
the hillside Hermitage the the thing was
I mean people are always sending me
videos or asking about like YouTube
Dharma teachers and so forth and I've I
mean never have I really been all that
interested in like reading

um

like the the teachings of some other
monk it's usually very boring to me this
almost always it's just very boring I
mean the original neonamoli who was uh
uh he lived in uh Sri Lanka he was a
British monk who lived in Ceylon I guess
it was called in those days like between
1950 and 1960. he translated the wisdi

Maga and a bunch of other things

I know something about him

but uh I don't think he's the one up the
hillside Herbert he was from the island
Hermitage in Sri Lanka and that's who I
thought was being referred to here at
first

yeah I have no idea who it is

so

I suppose I could have been a good boy
and at least watched some of his stuff
on YouTube and come up with an opinion
but yeah I I mean as a general rule I
just do not watch

like Dharma videos

I've never had even when I was most into

into Dharma I was just I just wasn't
that interested it's stuff I've always
all heard before I mean you get to a
point where you've heard everything
pretty much

and it's and it's just kind of boring
also it kind of reminds me of a friend I
used to have in Bali he was a trumpet
player from St Louis

and he was a musician a very talented
musician I assume he still is

but um he said he didn't like listening
to anybody else's music because he
didn't want anybody else's music to
contaminate his own individual personal
style and I think there's a an element
of Truth to that in me also

that's probably another reason why I just am not interested in watching other Dharma teachers YouTube videos or reading their books I mean I have done it occasionally I do it sometimes but as I say it's usually boring so I'm just gonna uh go to the next question this this also is From Austin it's like Austin had a few up here but it's the same Austin I'm pretty sure I just uh have him down here twice because he asked more than one question is there anything you learned as a Buddhist monk that a Layman couldn't learn with a consistent meditation

practice yeah sure I learned a lot of things as a Buddhist monk that a Layman couldn't learn with a consistent meditation practice although it wasn't necessarily about meditation like being a monk in Burma you learn about what it was like to live in the Buddhist time because you're living a lifestyle similar to The Lifestyle lived in the Buddhist time in a culture and climate similar you know you're living in a this very traditional pretty much I mean the the Flora and the fauna and the climate are very similar to the Ganges Valley and the Buddhist culture and you know just living the way monks lived in those

times and so you get a lot of insight into into what like the the rules of monastic discipline are saying or some of the some of the stuff in lesothos because you're right there it's like you're living it you're not just reading about it in a book you're not sitting in an apartment in Manhattan reading about ancient India and to some degree you've got your foot you know dipping into the water of ancient India in a sense um also

most lay people I mean if they're very talented or they just don't have to work for a living they might be able to do meditation full time

to the point where you just get into the
really subtle States

and mostly people can't manage it that's
one reason why Janna

um is is mainly a Hmong thing

unless as I say somebody just has a real
talent and there are a lot of people

like that you can just sit down for the
very first time their very first

Meditation Retreat and they're just
sitting there like a like a rock

that does happen sometimes

so I think I'll just move on to the next
question this is from

this is from Outer Haven and this is

kind of a strange one what are your

thoughts on the tongue mood

better have a drink before this

the tall mode

well

um for starters I should confess that

I've never read the tall mood

I mean I know that it's like a

commentary to a mosaic law

so I mean it's obviously a Jewish text

it's like a commentary on their Mosaic

law and uh yeah I really don't know that

much about it and they've a lot of their

I mean the Jews seem to follow the

talmud as though it is scripture like

you know in the in the Old Testament it

says you know Thou shalt not boil a kid

in its mother's milk one of the few

attempts in the Old Testament to be

Humane towards animals

is just sort of a a travesty or a

sacrilege to boil a baby in its own

Mama's milk right

but then the tall mood I assume which is

the commentary on all this just has it

worked out so that it's you know you you

cannot eat meat and dairy products in

the same meal and so you got very strict

uh Orthodox Jews that have got not only

two sets of dishes but four sets of

dishes you know they got the the meat

dishes and the dairy products dishes and

then the meat without leavening during

Passover dishes and the dairy products

without leaving

uh during Passover dishes

uh I assume that some of the like the racial supremacism stuff and like the anti-goy stuff from what I have heard there's a lot of that in the tall mood I mean whatever of it exists there's a lot of that in the tall mood but um yeah other than that I really don't know that much about it so I'm just going to move on to this question

and this is from Jeremy

and Jeremy says love sounds more like an ascetic practice I would appreciate more info on love and or romantic love I don't see how romantic love can be a path to Nirvana Buddha and his monks do

not seem to follow that path did Buddha
say that it was a valid path yet not a
recommended one as I understand its
celibacy is a requirement in
accomplishing the path to have sex which
he spells s-e-c-k-s which is nice one
must be aroused for their equipment to
work that is sense indulgement and not
restraint is it not skillful for an
alcoholic oh it is not skillful for an
alcoholic to get drunk and then try to
observe Dharma isn't that what Tantra
tries to do use sex against against secs
as a vehicle to whatever they view as
enlightenment
okay as a previous video I was talking
about romantic love as a spiritual

vehicle and certainly terravada Buddhism
does not endorse it because it's it was
very traditional ancient Indian you
renounce the world you go wandering out
in the forest you know just go alone
like the Horn of the rhinoceros avoid
all sensual Pleasures other than the
ones that are completely unavoidable
like taking a bath occasionally
sleeping eating food
and so

I mean it's largely a cultural thing
that terravada Buddhism is just based on
this shromana tradition of ancient
Northern India where it was just
very clear cut you avoid sensual

Pleasures you go alone you're celibate
you know you have to be a a saint in
accordance with ancient Indian concepts
of sainthood in order to become
enlightened

um in Hinduism

they do accept romantic love as a
spiritual path

um I've pointed this out before that
there are a lot of

um precedents you know there's the love
of of Rama for Sita for example you know
the whole ramayana epic is based on this
or you in Ramos God you know he was an
avatar of Vishnu so there you've got you
know this Vishnu who's very devoted to
his wife and goes on this great epic

adventure to rescue her from from on the
monster and all that or uh

Krishna and Radha again Radha and

Krishna were not married they were

lovers I think Radha might have actually

been married to somebody else

so they at least have

um precedence in in like you know in

Hinduism not in terrible out of Buddhism

which is very dry very ascetic

but just because teravana endorses a

certain battle doesn't mean that you

know nothing else could possibly work

for for anybody

um

even in in uh Hinduism they've got

different approaches between the the
guru and the disciple

or between the disciple and God and one
of those approaches is the the approach
of you know the lover for the Beloved
so

it is it is uh much more

uh endorsed in Hinduism it's just not
endorsed in terrible because as I say
terrible Buddhism is just very dry
ascetic path very traditional based on
the ancient North Indian the shramana
tradition

and um you know that's that worked for
them that's the way you do it although I
wouldn't go so far as to say that only
that would work for everybody

and romantic love I mean it definitely
has its some saric elements
but at the same time it's uh it's like a
an accelerator I mean it's like
you I mean you've got to deal with
difficult stuff on a regular basis and
love
is I mean the Perfection of Love would
be Enlightenment I I do believe that
that love Is Just open-hearted
Acceptance in romantic love there's like
the hormonal mating Instinct stuff mixed
in which muddies the waters a bit
complicates things a bit
but still I mean if you can have
unconditional love for anybody

then that is uh very Advanced spiritual
um practice I guess you could call it
and so I mean if you love
your woman or you love your golf clubs
or your dog or I mean love in it and of
itself to the extent that it's genuine
love just genuine open-hearted
acceptance I mean that's necessarily a
good thing

but as I say romantic love tends to be
more conditional

you know left in its natural state
like a woman loving her children is more
unconditional because
she's going to love her children whether
they're good or bad whether they're
beautiful or ugly you know whether

they're brilliant or stupid you know
she's going to love them regardless if
she's a good mother whereas
romantic love it's more conditional you
know I love you so long as you treat me
right as long as you're faithful that
kind of a thing
so it can be a difficult path I mean if
you wanted to really make romantic love
into a spiritual path just like a real
serious I mean you'd have to be
completely unconditional no matter what
the other person did
and uh
I mean that that could be uh
I mean almost like a road to hell you'd

have to it's like the spiritual path
going through hell you know it could be
if you if you picked the wrong person
anyway

but uh yeah it's not Orthodox terrible
but I would not rule it out completely
just because

uh like traditional ancient Indian
Buddhism was uh very dry very acidic
very clear cut with regard to
like uh celibacy and asceticism and all
that

so I'll just move on to the next
question

this is from
crocodilla or crocodia

not sure about that Double L and

crocodilus says in Christianity the goal is eternal life and Buddhism the goal is to end this eternal samsara if someone was atheist wouldn't it be logical to just commit suicide like godica and then he includes the reference of some you to nikaya 423 and yeah that's true that's I've I've said this before there are some teachers uh one of them is uh was a Hindu I suppose he was a Hindu uh what was his name

Maharaja

and nisargadata Maharaj said that there is no reincarnation there's no rebirth and uh at the same time to exist as a

suffer he accepted the the Buddhist
first Noble Truth so if that's the case
if there's no rebirth and to exist is to
suffer then obviously the the logical
thing to do would just be to commit
suicide and that would end the suffering
and then you wouldn't just get reborn
into more of it whereas in Buddhism of
course
or Hinduism too or Jainism or any any
system that involves rebirth even even
Christianity you're reborn into heaven
or hell
um
that uh
yeah just committing suicide isn't going
to solve the problem because it's not

just gonna cut it off you know it's not
going to cut off the live stream or the
stream of consciousness

but yeah it's true it's if you're if
you're trying to escape from some sorrow
or uh and and there's no reverse I mean
there's once you're dead you're dead
then obviously the thing to do is just
commit suicide

not that I'm endorsing that because uh I
think there's something after after you
die that uh the the stream of

Consciousness or the life force or
schopenhowerian will is just gonna cause
a continuation somehow

so the next question is from Brembo

and Brembo says what is your
understanding of

I read about this as someone's partner
to support them in developing spiritual
Perfections

well to tell you the truth I don't think
I've ever seen the term

paricharika before although in Pali it
would mean let's see para is like foot
or it can also mean like footsteps

party chartica is like one who walks

near so it's like someone who you know

walks with you you know someone who

walks along with your footsteps and so

that would be like uh you know the help
mate

it's it's I assume it's not the same

thing as the kanyana Mita which is the
good friend you know the spiritual
friend who helps you and supports you in
in Dharma this might be somewhat like
yeah sodara was to go to my you know how
they're reborn together again and again
they're sort of

um

helping each other sort of you know
fulfilling each other's Karma and that
kind of a thing

but uh again I can't really say because
I'm not familiar with the term

you know I'm not sure that it's in the
in the poly texts although it looks like
a poly word so it could be in the

commentaries

so we'll just move on to brambo's next

and second question

where are the original sutos kept have

you seen them how did you feel when you

saw them well

this is uh

based on somewhat of a misunderstanding

I think because the original sutas were

oral

the sutas were an oral tradition for

hundreds of years like 500 years before

they were finally written down

so the original sutas were just uh you

know in the in the memories of the monks

who memorized them

and uh where they were first written

down I don't even know

um it was a I think it was what was it
the fourth Council in in Sri Lanka like

500 years after the time of the Buddha

and um the the polytopitica was

endangered there were times when like

Hindu Kings would be persecuting

Buddhist monks persecuting Buddhism and

some of the the texts had almost died

out because almost all the monks who had

memorized them were were gone

and so they figured it's better to just

write the things down and that's when it

happened it was Indian tradition with

The Vedas also that you just didn't

write them down that they were memorized

and just recited orally

um the oldest suitors I have seen that

I'm aware of

is uh in Mandalay there's a monastery

there I think where the Buddhist fifth

Council by the Burmese Reckoning was was

held

and they've got the entire polytopitica

engraved in Marble on these big

um they look sort of like big headstones

like at a cemetery there's just these

big slabs with the entire polytopitica

um engraved on these things

and uh I mean I was kind of impressed

you know there's a lot of work to do

that

it wasn't especially

um beautiful or

um I mean really the the suit is the the
polytopitica

it's um you know it's not really

localized in an original text I mean

nobody can say where the original Bible
was you know

sort of evolved at least the Bible did I
mean there's the oldest Bible they've
got and it's still a manuscript it would
uh

I mean less than 2 000 years old

and it's the same way with the polytext

so I think I should just move on to the

next one here and that's from Chaplin

and Chaplin says

I really enjoyed your series of books
last year you have led such a
fascinating life would you ever consider
writing an autobiography any other
upcoming books we can look forward to
for that matter well I still have at
least one full book of essays that I
could publish

um maybe two

and uh with regard to an autobiography I
mean it's it's even I mean even editing
the the book that I just mentioned you
know I've got enough material easily
to to make at least one more book but
I'm working full time

I really don't have a lot of spare time
I'm not the sort of person that just

wants to be a slave and just be like
working all the time

so I'm not sure I mean I I think I would
enjoy writing an autobiography and I
have led an interesting life I've done a
lot of things that most people haven't
done

so yeah I'm I mean it's something I've
considered many times and I'd be willing
to do it but I'd have to have

um

more

more in like

what would you call Financial

Independence I wouldn't have to be

working full-time like at a sheet metal

shop maybe once I finally you know get
into the White Collar

uh jobs at the sheet metal place

um I might at least be less tired when I
get home

but um maybe I'd have more energy for
for writing this kind of stuff but right
now I've just got to pay the bills and
I've gotta work and support myself until
maybe someday I'll get enough support
that I don't need to work in a sheet
metal shop or somehow for whatever
reason

you know I'll have like more free time
to just sit down and start writing a
full-length look
or even even just editing editing the

one that I've already got material
written for

but um

yeah I do hope that at least at the very
least the fourth book will will come out
within the next year or two

so I think I'll just move on to

chaplain's next question

and chaplain says in your experience how
do most Buddhists you know celebrate

Christmas do you have any Christmas
plans

well most Buddhists I know don't

celebrate Christian Christmas because

it's not a Buddhist holiday like in

Burma I mean it's on the calendars but

it's not a day off I'm pretty sure
um Christmas goes by in in like a
Burmese Village and nobody notices I've
forgotten when I was living in Burma
I've just forgotten about Christmas and
my own birthday for that matter just
looking at the calendar trying to figure
out what day it is it's like Oh
Christmas was yesterday
that kind of a thing
um

so I assume most Buddhists in the west
will still have a Christmas tree and
exchange presents and that sort of thing
but um there's no specifically Buddhist
celebration of Christmas
for uh relatively obvious reasons I

guess

and do I have any Christmas plans yeah

I'm gonna have Christmas with my

sweetheart and we're going to give each

other presents and

we got a Christmas tree and everything

although uh I'm personally skeptical

that Jesus was really born on

December 25th I mean that was just the

the Christians conveniently uh replacing

a pagan holiday which was uh the feast

day of Sol Invictus during saturnalia

with uh

with uh like a Christian holiday which

the Christians did a lot of that just

sort of

um replacing

pagan holidays or concepts of Christian

ones to make it easier for the the

populist to accept them

so

but I digress

so I'm gonna move on to uh chaplain's

third and last question and the last

question of this q a

and that is

how can we as Buddhists come to terms

with the problematic Western Dynamic of

Buddhist self-induced suffering versus

victim blaming would you consider doing

a video with Brian and ajan punadamo on

this since it comes up a lot and is hard

for westerners to grasp well it is a

good idea to do a video with Brian and John punadama but as I think I've already mentioned received such a backlash for interacting with poor Brian Rue that uh his uh respectfully bowed out kind of reluctantly bowed out from doing videos with us mainly because he has got to keep his keep his supporters in Good Humor to some degree which is kind of a shame I I'm thinking about writing the next blog post about like Buddhist cancel culture but uh getting to the rest of this question here how can we as Buddhists come to terms with the problematic

Western Dynamic of Buddhist self-induced
suffering versus victim blaming well
victim blaming is just kind of a
it's just kind of a jargon that got
invented recently as far as I know and
it's mainly a leftist concept you know
like a a woman dresses like a prostitute
dresses like a complete [__] and then
when she gets molested or even cat
called you know she's she's like trying
to
blame you know anyone but herself and
then if someone says well I mean you
don't dress like a prostitute and walk
the streets at 3am you know nobody's
nobody's gonna act that way
and then that's called that's victim

blaming but really it's

um

maybe maybe a better example would just be like abused children because they're they're not like deliberately putting themselves in a problematic situation and so you can say well I mean it is their karma

and that's victim blaming but I mean it's like

I mean victim blaming is just kind of a pejorative term you know it's just like this jargon that got apparently invented by the left just as a way of you know sort of protecting themselves they can blame everybody else they can blame

Hawaii

you know they don't have to blame
themselves for their own messed up
problems

um

but I mean it is true it's just
something that has to be understood
better because most people just don't
understand how Karma works
and uh it is true that that from the
Buddhist point of view and I think from
just an objective point of view all
suffering is ultimately self-inflicted
because suffering is volitional I mean
ultimately you have the choice it's just
that most people are too semi-conscious
and just on automatic pilot you know

they're just going through force of habit and so they just don't realize that instead of just being miserable about something they actually have a choice

you know they don't have to be miserable about it

but with regard to little kids I mean they haven't even learned that much yet so it is true that the the suffering of abused children

um you have to have signal compassion for that I mean ultimately technically you can't acknowledge that all suffering is self-inflicted

but uh I mean little kids they just

can't be expected to be philosophers
and so I mean just setting aside the the
[__] woman who dresses like a [__]
woman and then gets molested you know
from walking down the street in the
middle of the night

um

yeah I mean it is kind of tricky because
it's it's like an ugly truth just
because a truth is ugly doesn't mean
that it's not true

and so going with Carmine yeah I mean it
shouldn't really be any kind of
uh influencer with regard to our
attitude towards abused children I mean
we can accept okay fine you know it's
like they're not skillful at steering

the their vehicle yet or it's like uh
you know little kids have me have
nightmares more than than grown-ups do
just because they're not they're not
good at steering the direction of their
dreams same way in the conscious waking
state they're just not very good at
steering their way into a good alternate
reality you know if that makes any sense
at all but but still I mean you have to
have compassion for them and protect
them as well as we can
and it's the same way with anyone really
I mean
um I mean it's not victim blaming in the
sense that you're saying well you know

screw those people I don't care this
their it's their own doing but I mean
you still have to have compassion I mean
that's that's true also and you should
try to help people to stop suffering if
you are able to do so
so there is that
but it is true I mean that's one of the
most important things you can know if
you know anything about Buddhism
foreign
is ultimately self-inflicted you do have
a choice to be miserable or happy
or at least
equanimous
so I mean if you hear something bad
happening to somebody

um the first reaction shouldn't be well
serum Karma you know especially if it's
you know just some little kid or just
some Normie that means they don't have
the

and just realistically they've never
been exposed to the idea you know they
just naturally assumed mainstream
culture tells you if you're
uncomfortable or inconvenienced you
you're unhappy you know you just watch
TV commercials or whatever and that's
what you're taught in a consumeristic
materialistic spiritually bankrupt
culture

you know even just the mildest

discomfort or inconvenience isn't
necessarily going to cause suffering and
that's not true

so I mean if you hear about someone
who's suffering I mean you don't just
blur it out that it's due to their own
Karma it's all self-inflicted I mean
there should still be some compassion
and you know if you're in a position to
do so you can you can do do your part to
help alleviate the situation

but um

yeah I think that would be the best way
to to come to terms with it is just not
blurting out the you know it's their own
Karma you know when you hear something
bad happening to somebody because you

know in a way that is kind of victim
blaming even though ultimately it's it's
legitimate it's it's true from Buddhist
point of view but still I mean victim
blaming is uh

it's just another derogatory slur
invented by the West to uh justify their
blaming of evil Whitey mostly

and that's the the last question

so if you got any more questions and I
assume some of you do

you are encouraged to include them in
the comments below the video or if you
have access to my subscribe star you can
leave your comments there or if you have
access to the Discord server you can

leave your questions there

and I do request that if you do have

questions for the Q a you you not

believe them in like when under random

videos there aren't q a videos because I

may or may not when I'm compiling the

questions remember that they're in this

unusual place

and please take a look at the URL links

below if you haven't bought my books

they're they're very nice books and um

uh feel free to uh like And subscribe

and be happy

hello and welcome to episode 38 of
question and answer

I am your host plan your Bossa and uh
the holidays are coming up we got
saturnalia and the feast day of Soul
Invictus coming up Yule and so we got
the the pagan
accoutrement

accoutrement Mall

in the background to uh The Gnome we got
a gnome

so without any further ado

I'm going to answer questions and we've
got a fair amount a little more than the
usual number I think

and the first question is from rafi46

and this is kind of an interesting one
what does Buddhism think about parents
who raise their children by spanking
them

and uh I've never I don't remember ever
seeing anything about
parents like disciplining their children
in like Buddhist texts I assume it's in
there somewhere maybe like the sub
commentaries or something
but um I assume that so long as parents
are spanking their children just as a
way of like
giving them
discipline like I mean they're not like
pissed off and just wailing on them
because they're in a bad mood I mean

that obviously would be bad karma and uh
it would be more harmful for the
children than good for them more harmful
for everyone involved

um just giving them a SWAT on the behind
when they're so young that they can't
really understand much of anything else
I don't think that um

I don't think that Buddhism in general
would disapprove of that strongly I mean
kind of like really Orthodox terravada
Buddhism just disapproves of having
children in general

but um

or just doing the deed that results in
children

um but I think just disciplining them
with uh you know like the old saying you
know this is going to hurt you more than
or it's going to hurt me more than it
hurts you that kind of a thing I mean so
long as you're doing it sincerely for
the sake of like trying to make your
kids better people

um yeah I don't think it's that bad I
was spanked a little bit when I was a
kid and uh look at me now Look look how
how I've become

so I'll just move on to the next
question and just also from rafi46

and uh Rafi says Rafi 46 says I should
say one suta in the angura nikaya
records that the Buddha spoke of seven

types of a wife the first three kinds
are heading for unhappiness in this
world or the next one of them is the
Tyrant wife who the Buddha described
among other things as being domineering
does this mean that the ideal Buddhist
wife should be devout
towards her husband his DV d-e-v-o-t so
maybe that's devoted
so the ideal Buddhist wife should be
devoted towards her husband there is a
asuta it's a famous one it's one of the
relatively few that's directed towards
the lay people rather than towards monks
called the sigalo Vada suta
I don't remember what nikaya it's in

maybe the majima I don't remember now
where he uh he goes into the qualities
of a good wife and um
a good wife should be uh
um I mean if you shouldn't waste your
husband's money she should be faithful
to him she should you know take care of
the house you know she should keep the
home in order you know manage the
servants and all that if there are any
um

so I guess a a Buddhist wife might be a
little better off than uh one in the
Bible it's just supposed to obey
um so yeah I would I would advise anyone
wanting to know like the the proper
duties of a Buddhist layperson towards

other Buddhist lay people would be in
the sigalo Vada suta which I'm sure
there are plenty of translations
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from drunk druck
and drunk druck says what do you think
of Buddhist veganism are you one
yourself

um no I'm not I've never been a vegan
vegan vegan I don't even know how to
pronounce it how can I be one

um I used to be a vegetarian and
ironically I stopped being vegetarian
after I became a monk I was living in
this desert Wasteland in central Burma
and sometimes all I'd get in my bowl

would be like pink chewy rice and pork
and some badass cookies that were I mean
they were just like Zero nutritional
value in the cookies so it was a matter
of just survival

that I started eating meat again

um just left my own devices

I tend to be inclined towards what in
Hinduism would be called a satvik diet
which is largely vegetarian I mean it's
technically vegetarian it's like

fruits nuts greens and dairy products

but

my sweetheart is somewhat of a carnivore
and so uh

I'm eating quite a lot of meat myself in
fact I had a pork chop for dinner

so with regard to veganism

um yeah I just would not give up dairy products especially like cheese and milk I just I just like that too much it doesn't it doesn't make much sense to just become a Pure vegan it's not really good for your health we are not evolved to be vegans

so

um

I used to when I was a vegetarian I would occasionally eat shellfish because as a biologist I know that they don't have a nervous system like we do they apparently don't have pain receptors they don't they apparently don't feel

pain so they don't mind being killed as much as like a cow or a chicken does but um even even devout terravada Buddhists eat meat as a general rule the Buddha himself ate meat in fact uh he uh he died after eating some bad pork according to the legend although the Mahayana Buddhists changed that into uh a mushroom I mean the original term for what the Buddha ate right before he died was sukara madawa sukara means Pig madawa means tender or tenderized so probably it means tender pork but um the Mahayana Buddhists who were vegetarian didn't want to believe that the Buddha ate meat and so they uh they interpreted as something tender that

pigs like to eat like truffles or
mushrooms something like that
um but there are rules in the ancient
rules of monastic discipline like saying
a monk is not allowed to ask for uh
dainty food like meat including meat
meat fish milk a few others unless he's
sick which of course means that he can
he can eat it unless also there's the
Proviso that if he's given permission to
ask for whatever he wants in advance
then he can ask for for meat
but um so yeah terrible Buddhism is not
even really vegetarian
uh they were data who's like the villain
in ancient Buddhist history he's sort of

like the the Buddhist Judas Iscariot
um he he demanded that the Buddha
require all monks to be vegetarian and
the monk said or the Buddha said
um you know monks can be vegetarian if
they want but it's not going to be
mandatory

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Fred
and uh I think Fred's got another
question farther down that uh I forgot
about this one when I was compiling the
list

anyway Fred says does going Beyond
perception and feeling mean one is going
beyond the aggregates
um well there'd still be Consciousness

so it wouldn't be going beyond the
aggregate of consciousness

um

is this going to be this is kind of a deep
question though does going Beyond
perception and feeling mean one is going
beyond the Aggregates going Beyond
perception and feeling it's one of the
most

um Advanced or exalted or subtle
meditative states there is the the
cessation of perception and feeling

um

which is kind of a
sort of a deep trance state
but it's only temporary

and I guess to the extent that you're I
mean you're not identifying with the

Aggregates or

um if there's no perception and no
feeling

um it would mean that those are dormant
those two Aggregates are dormant

but um it is just temporary and you

still have five Aggregates at least uh

on standby the whole time

so I think I'll just move on to the next

question we'll get to another one from

Fred a little a little later

and this is from Tut DVD

and DVD says

often you hear people say they want to

follow what the Buddha actually taught

why is it not fair to say this idea of the Buddha as an ultimately enlightened person Authority has been exaggerated over time you saw firsthand with the stories of your levitating over the city the crazy embellishments people get up to so why after all these years with the Buddha and his original teachings hold any special significance everyone seems to have different ideas of what was or wasn't actual Buddha's words but ultimately it's guesswork and why does it matter what one guy had to say anyway what I deduct as the historical Buddha is most likely being was a poet and contemplative why hold him up in any

special regard

well I mean if you're a Buddhist

then you would be following

what the Buddha taught

I mean it says in the texts that I mean

the Buddha said you know after he died

the dhamma itself is the teacher and he

really I really doubt that he encouraged

people to worship Him

that's any like devotionalism I assume

is a later a later development in

Buddhism but

um when I became a Buddhist monk okay I

wanted to follow with the Buddha Tom

because he's the founder of the system

and he supposedly was an enlightened

being

and I mean if you want to become a Buddhist it seems like it would be pretty much it'd be important to actually follow what the founder taught like a Christian presumably would want to follow what Jesus taught or a Muslim would want to follow what Muhammad taught because they were the founders of the system and they presumably knew better than anyone else what

what people should do at least within the context of the the system that they founded

and so it is true there's all kinds of uh weird mythology associated with the

Buddha that um

uh in a lot of cases can be weeded out

you do a little detective work you have

to you know examine things carefully and

try to determine as well as you can what

the Buddha did and did not teach

and you're not going to be 100 correct

but at least if you use some intelligent

methods that at least you'll get closer

to the truth at least you'll weed out a

lot of the uh dead wood

um so yeah it just seems common sense to

me

that um the Buddha was

wiser than me

and so if I if I'm going to be a

Buddhist then I'd it's like uh a duty to

try to follow as well as you can with
the Buddha taunt

um I mean you're taking the risk of
being mistaken in your interpretation
but then again you're taking a great a
risk of being mistaken in any
interpretation of anything

so it's just

um it's a fairly solid I mean once you
once you can weed out most of the the
mythology and the like the devotionalism
and that sort of thing and you're just
following his instructions that are
found in the texts

then um

yeah I mean if you've got a teacher that

is a Buddhist or or you know whoever
your teacher is you can you can follow
he says too I mean it's been
that you'd want to know for sure what
your what your teacher said you should
and shouldn't do

um part of the thing is that you're
assuming that the teacher knows more
than than you do or knows better than
you do

and so it makes sense to try to follow
as well as you can what he said you
should do and uh bear in mind that uh
he's probably wiser than you and so it
just makes sense I mean you have to make
your own decisions including decision
to follow this teacher or that teacher

or to start or stop following some
teacher I mean you have to make your own
decisions but still if you find an
authority

someone that you think is wiser than you
who understands reality better than you
than you want to try to you know take
that seriously and find out as well as
you can what the person did or did not
teach

so it's it's kind of an interesting
question although uh

I mean for me that was really all I
wanted to do was find out as well as I
could what the historical godama Buddha
taught and follow it because after all I

was a member of the Sangha that he
founded

so I'll just move on to the next
question and this is from Athena's sigil
and Athena's sigil says so Ponyo I know
that you've left the monk Hood but do
you miss it I know you've resolved to
live a quote unquote normal
life but is there anything from your old
life that you wish you still did if you
don't answer that's okay ciao
well

one thing that was nice about being a
monk is uh you didn't have to work for a
living and so you can just uh meditate
and contemplate and study and you had I
had a lot of I had more energy than or

at least I was expending
my energy in a more dharmic and
contemplative and philosophical way and
and wasn't having to make money and pay
bills that sort of thing
so I mean there is that
also my mental States uh were often more
subtle than they are now just because
you've got less commotion going on
you're just living this quiet life often
in a cave out in the forest
and I mean there was it was just very
simple
and so you didn't have a lot of
commotion going on to distract you and
everything and your mind could get

really chilled out so that was kind of
nice too

but I I have no regrets at all I'm uh
I'm content living the way I am I'm my
life is more joyful now than it was when
I was living in a cave in a Burmese
Forest

but um yeah those would be the main
things also I kind of missed wall geckos
that I mean anyone who's lived in
Southeast Asia knows about wall geckos
or these little lizards that change
color and Chirp like sparrows and
run around on the walls even on the
ceilings thing just run straight up a
window pane they're cool I like those
but uh I guess that would be the main

things that I miss

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from skeptic 46.

and skeptic 46 says the more I read

about Buddhism the more I'm worried that

the idea of Enlightenment or even just

the control of one's emotions through

meditation is essentially depriving

oneself of the magic of life isn't

sadness and Pain part of the human

experience we need Darkness to see light

and all that if we eliminate all

suffering then how would we have

anything to compare Joy with

well

I think there's like two parts to this

question that I can answer

um with regard to

Joy and self-raiming it's like a roller

coaster ride it's just up and down and

what a monk is going for isn't just Joy

it's it's like

it's like the happiness that has no

opposite you know it's just like Divine

Bliss you could say like Nirvana it's

just merging with Ultimate Reality

so I mean it's it's Way Beyond any

worldly happiness this from the point of

view of of Buddhist philosophy even

ordinary happiness is is a kind of duka

or suffering partly just because it's

it's unreliable and very impermanent

um

let's see

but the thing is

most people are just are just not ready

for enlightenment they don't even want

Enlightenment I think most monks really

don't want to become enlightened I used

to think when I was a junior monk that

if somebody invented an Enlightenment

pill where you just take this pill and

you become fully enlightened I think

even most monks would run from it as

though it were a demon-possessed rabid

snake

just because people are afraid of

Enlightenment it's like a kind of death

who you think you are either ceases to

exist or just is completely transcended
and becomes irrelevant
and most people just don't like that
there's there's a in in Buddhist
cosmology the entire physical Universe
gets destroyed usually by fire
you know every zillion gajillion years
and so all the beings in the material
Universe have to go up into this really
high heaven Realm
and there are yogis and swamis and other
meditators who try their entire lives to
get into this meditation or to get into
this Heaven realm through practicing
meditation and so forth and a lot of
them most of them can't get there but
now because the physical universe is

destroyed uh they have to go somewhere
and so just through
whatever natural Cosmic law or whatever
just everybody winds up in this
a very Advanced Heaven realm including
like mosquitoes and politicians and
prostitutes and drug drug dealers drug
addicts Penguins everything they wind up
in this very Advanced Heaven around and
they can't stand it it's it's just like
it's boring they're just not ready for
it they're just not ready for just
profound Bliss it's just boring to them
they want action they want trouble
and so most people just aren't ripe for
enlightenment and one reason why we're

like the beings of this Earth are not
enlightened is just they don't even want
it it's just scary they they're just not
ready for it

so if a person is ready for it then uh
it doesn't really matter if uh the
so-called magic of life is gone
because it's infinitely better than the
magic of Life full Enlightenment it's
just like merging with God
you know

in quotes

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is also from skeptic 46.

do you think it's bad karma that Brian

Rue is so delusional about Hitler I mean

it's enough to look at Hitler's earliest

speeches and writings to know that this
guy was a psychopathic lunatic
you know speech in 1920 for example he
said that he did not want to be an
anti-semite who wanted to create pogrom
sentiment but that he had an unrelenting
determination to get to the root of the
evil and eradicate it by any means
necessary

well

sweet tea

um I do not agree with Brian Rue's
assessment of the fuhrer as just
completely good guy
you know he was the guy wearing the
white hat and people like Winston

Churchill were the bad guys

um yeah I don't go that far although I

do think that Hitler has been

demonized even more than Donald Trump by

the mainstream

and he wasn't as bad as people claim he

is I mean he wasn't as bad as just

common knowledge that you read in

history books I mean he certainly has

Badness but I mean he wasn't a total

delusional lunatic I mean or as a

psychopathic lunatic I mean he obviously

had enough sanity that he was very Adept

at politics up until he just started uh

just annexing all of his neighboring

countries

um I mean it is true that he was

anti-Semitic

and um I mean it's questionable whether
he wanted to just genocide the entire
Hebrew race

um there was talk about just resettling
them in Madagascar and that kind of a
thing

he did have a few uh Jewish people that
were friends and I think there was at
least one high profile Jew in the SS

um

so I mean but I mean the main point of
the question here is do I think it's bad
karma that Brian Rue
believes what he believes about Hitler
well any kind of delusion can be called

is is Bad Karma so I mean people that are delusional about Hitler in the opposite direction who just think he's the evilest human being whoever lived might be making worse Karma simply because they've got a negative mental state going this kind of like hatred and aversion whereas Brian Rue is just idealizing somebody and trying to see the best in them and succeeding apparently

so I mean I would say there's probably worse karma for the people that really just think Hitler was just pure evil and as in most cases uh probably the correct

the correct uh route to take with regard

to Adolf Hitler is the middle path I
mean he uh he did cause a lot of trouble
especially in Europe

but uh so did Napoleon and Napoleon
isn't demonized I mean he uh he may have
depending on your sources wanted uh
genocide but then again

Moses was genocidal you know the the
founder of Judaism
wanted the complete extermination of the
Canaanites

he insisted upon it he demanded it
and he's considered to be just a great
prophet not only by uh Jews but also by
Christians and Muslims

so

I think Hitler just uh he offended
very grievously the wrong people
and uh
they've uh they've had the knives out
for him ever since
but I do not think he was as bad as
Stalin but Stalin was uh arguably a
psychopathic lunatic also I don't think
it was nearly as evil of a person as
someone like Pol Pot
and of course Mao killed more than
Hitler's Stalin and Pol Pot combined
so I'll just move on to the next
question

Oh but before I move on to this question
and obviously Brian Rue has got some bad
karma because he just can't get a break

he is I mean he's just

yeah he's persecuted essentially so I

mean that would be the result of Bad

Karma although whether it's partly just

because of his

um beliefs yeah I probably

yeah

but um

I think it goes it's way more than that

I think

um

just his beliefs about Adolf Hitler

don't really account for them

all the trouble he has encountered in uh

in recent years

so I'll just move on to the next

question

also from skeptic 46

and skeptic 46 says what do you and what

made you believe in rebirth

do you think it's possible to

scientifically prove that rebirth exists

well that's two questions I suppose I'll

take the first one first

what made me believe in rebirth I'm not

100 percent

sold on anything really

um

but

I do believe that anything that is

possible

is I mean it happens

maybe I mean in some way somehow in an

infinite universe that I mean if

anything is possible

it's it's going to happen and it is

happening

um but I mean that just kind of opens

the door sort of uh metaphysically for

the possibility of it

um but the main reason why I take

rebirth as a working hypothesis is

because people much wiser than I am have

endorsed it

like uh not only Buddhism and Hinduism

but um like one of my first spiritual

teachers was Ram Das

I just that's how

um he sort of uh red pillled me on on

worldliness to some degree

uh he was one of the first teachers that

I had a spiritual teacher that I had

just just through his books I never met

him in person

my father firmly believed in rebirth in

fact he claimed to remember some of his

past lives

he uh very strongly identified with a

past life back around the 1700s Scottish

fellow named Jason Haskell

so when I was a kid I was hearing

stories about that

but um

yeah it's mainly that people that I

respect who I consider to be very wise

for the most part have endorsed it and I

mean there is some scientific evidence
like Ian Stevenson I think as he was at
the University of Virginia did a lot of
research especially on small children
that would claim to remember past lives
you know there sometimes they would
remember how they got murdered or
something they'd still be blaming
somebody

for for killing them in their previous
existence like sort of thing but I don't
know if it's possible to scientifically
prove that rebirth does or does not
exist

I mean science is very limited in its in
what it is able to to do and a

scientific proof mainly just means that
uh

I mean it seems to work until some some
other Theory comes along and and usurps
it

I don't know if science even reaches as
far as just the mechanism of how rebirth
occurs assuming that rebirth does occur
but I'm not firmly I don't have firm
faith in it I just accept it as a
working hypothesis

uh so I'll just move on to uh skeptic

46's last question here

how can we criticize Islam from a
Buddhist perspective using the Buddha's
words

well

there are sutas where the Buddha
essentially mocks belief in the creator
of God

you know he refers to it as the blind
leading the blind people that have never
met God are teaching other people what
God is like in fact he's there's this
one suta where he's got this it's
essentially a joke where the Buddha says
that someone who believes in God is like
a man who says he's in love with the
most beautiful woman in the world
so you asked this man what's this most
beautiful woman in the world what does
she look like is she tall or short he
said I don't know now what color hair

does she have and he doesn't know does
she have a light complexion or a dark
complexion he doesn't know he doesn't
know what her figure is like because
he's never seen her before but he's
still he's in love with the most
beautiful woman in the world and the
Buddha compared that with a theist who's
worshiping a god
that he's never seen and you know really
doesn't know about
um so there's that I mean another
obvious one
another obvious like uh way of
criticizing Islam from a Buddhist
perspective is just criticizing violence
I mean violence is condemned in Buddhism

and

Islam clearly it endorses violence in fact it endorses killing other human beings I mean Muhammad himself was a kind of Bandit and then the Muslims accept this themselves I mean this isn't just some sort of islamophobic rant I mean we know this stuff from the Muslims themselves like their own records that when the Buddha was living in Medina he was supplementing his income and incomes of his followers by doing Bandit raids on Caravans going from Mecca to Damascus or from Southern Arabia to Damascus and back and I mean he fought in battles

he had people put to death

like uh I think it was the Jews of

Medina

I think it was the Jews in Medina where

he had all the males massacred

essentially and then sold all the women

and children into slavery

so just some of his behavior of the of

the founder of the system

um I mean just setting aside the

atrocities perpetrated by Muslims

afterwards like one of the greatest

genocides in history was the just the

the genocide of Indian Buddhists

when the the Muslim Turks invaded India

pretty much wiped out Buddhism in India

I mean it wasn't the only cause just

like uh Barbarian Invasion wasn't the
only cause of the collapse of the Roman
Empire but still I mean

millions and millions and millions of
Indian Buddhists were just killed

because they weren't they weren't

Muslims

so that would be probably the best ways
of criticizing Islam from a Buddhist
perspective is first just using Buddhist
arguments against monotheism and then
using Buddhist arguments against

um

violence in general

especially killing other humans

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is Fred's other question
that I should have put under the put it
under the the first question by Fred but
I I didn't notice that I did this
and Fred says will smoking cannabis send
you to hell

and for most people no it depends I mean
really it's not the the physical action
that is good or bad in Buddhism it's the
mental States associated with the
physical action so if somebody smokes
cannabis with really bad motives
that could help them to wind up in a bad
place in their next life but for most
people

um

I don't think so I mean one of the

reasons why I became a monk in the first place was because I started smoking cannabis as a teenager and uh took some psychedelics after that or while I started taking psychedelics shortly after I started smoking cannabis and um I mean it can awaken somebody to alternative ways of looking at reality which then gets them interested in meditation and just mysticism Eastern spirituality in general so will smoking cannabis send you to hell just the physical act I mean it won't send anybody to hell but um if somebody does it with really bad mental

States and maybe they do bad things when
they're high like they get Reefer
Madness or something then yeah it's
possible but for the most part I would
say no

so the next question is from Austin
and Austin says

what was the story of meeting your
sweetheart I'd imagine finding love was
hard for you as a monk
well

when we first met at least digitally on
the internet I was still a monk in Burma
I was living in some Monastery in uh
uh maymiel or pianulu in it's called
and um I was I had recently started my
my new blog my second blog

and mainly I just got an account on
minds.com which is like alt Facebook
um it's like a free
a free speech version of of Facebook and
a lot of the people that are kicked off
Facebook go to Minds as refugees or
people that just despise Facebook to
begin with me being one of them
um and people were just continually
pestering me to get onto Facebook and I
just refused so I compromised and got
onto minds.com instead and my sweetheart
was one of my first subscribers I think
I'm not sure exactly what she liked
about
um

about my content but there was just a
certain resonance between us and we just
immediately started liking each other
before we ever met each other really
just there was just this resonance
between us it was like a chemistry thing
so we just continued
interacting online
up until

um I dropped out of the monk hood and
then I went and met her in person and uh
we're we are together to this day
so

CNC says I'd imagine finding love was
hard for you as a monk
um

not as hard as you might think actually

especially in the west Western women do
not see monks as celibate holy men they
just see monks as another kind of man
so there's that too

so we'll just move on to Austin's next
question

and Austin says what would be the
difference between Nirvana and a
materialist's view of death my
understanding is nirvana is a state of
non-arising of any being or senses not
too dissimilar in my opinion well
death for a materialist would just be
blank nothing you know it would just be
Extinction nothingness and Nirvana
really is not

um nothing

I mean sometimes it's especially in

older texts or like older translations

Nirvana can be translated as Extinction

but really it's like the blowing out of

a candle or blowing out of a flame

and the ancient Indians

um they believed fire was a God it was

like it was divine it was the god Agni

was was fire and so they had different

ideas about fire than than we do I mean

now nowadays we we blow out a candle

flame and that's it and the candle flame

has ceased to exist but

in Ancient India they had this idea that

like this the spirit of fire was just

pervasive and it would assume

like uh like a material existence like
an obvious material existence while it
was burning but then when it went out
again it would just go back to this un
like this formless invisible state
and so that's kind of what Nirvana was
originally meant to represent in the in
the old uh metaphors of the the flame
going out

um so but I mean just even setting that
aside even setting aside ancient ideas
about fire in India Nirvana is
essentially merging with Ultimate
Reality

at least that's my interpretation as one
possible interpretation

um like a fully enlightened being is
already attained Nirvana like the Buddha
himself had already attained Nirvana
before he died it's not just something
that happens to you after you die like
an enlightened being after they die they
attain party Nirvana but they attained
Nirvana even while they're still alive
so it's just uh awareness of Ultimate
Reality really
at least in my opinion
so I mean to a materialist it might seem
like they're the same just simply
because the materials is not a Mystic he
doesn't accept that there's this uh
this this formless infinity or or that
just completely transcends even The

Duality of existence and non-existence I
mean a materialist doesn't think that
way really as a general rule

so

um yeah Nirvana is a mystical State and
just

hear utter non-existence is not a
mystical state that would be the main
difference I would say

so I'll just move on to Austin's next
question

do you believe there are any fully
enlightened beings today or in recent
memory

well this is kind of a trick question
and I mean I've already been talking

about enlightened beings but from a some
sorry point of view from a worldly point
of view

I mean they may not exist at all it
might just be like uh it's like a
paradox

or um like a trick question or
um

yeah it's just kind of it's it's just
this weird Paradox enlightenment
but um if there are any fully
enlightened beings let's assume that you
can say you can't point to someone and
say yes that person is or is not fully
enlightened yeah I would say that there
have been fully enlightened beings uh in
recent memory I think Ramana maharshi

who was a Hindu is a very good candidate
for full Enlightenment I think neem
Crowley Baba who is also a Hindu
although a very was a very different
personality and character than Ramana
maharshi I think he's those would be my
two top candidates for fully enlightened
beings of course there are plenty of
people claim to be fully enlightened
both of the famous krishnamurtis Eckhart
Tolle claims to be fully enlightened one
of my favorites
um in recent years is Paul Lowe who uh
somehow is is
I mean sometimes he insinuates that he's
fully enlightened at other times he he

says kind of like what I was saying just moments ago that I mean Enlightenment doesn't necessarily even mean anything um

you know Byron Katie is claimed to be fully enlightened uh Aja Shanti I think is claimed to be fully enlightened

um but whether they really are or not I mean that it could just be a trick question Osho was claimed to be fully enlightened

um yeah so in a way it's kind of a trick question weibo Seattle would be a good uh possibility for a terravonna Buddhist

uh monk who may have been fully
enlightened also uh some people believe
ajan Shah was enlightened some people
believe ajan man was enlightened

um

but I guess you're asking Austin here is
asking do I believe there are any fully
enlightened beings today or in recent
memory and I do think it could just be
like a paradoxical trick question
because within the context of samsara
and just worldly thinking and words and
language and all that
um that kind of context
uh just a fully enlightened being is
just kind of a paradox it's almost

meaningless

but um just assuming that there are enlightened beings yeah I would say that they're they're enlightened beings like Ram Das who I'm pretty sure believed his Guru named Curly Baba was fully in line he used to say that um people could just go halfway around the world and search Himalayan caves looking for an enlightened holy man when the whole time their Aunt Margaret back in Vermont was fully enlightened the whole time and the thing is that instead of telling I'm telling you like the the secrets of the universe you just say have some soup but it turns out that was the perfect thing to say under the circumstances is

have some soup

but um the very short answer to this is
I would just say yeah I do believe there
are fully enlightened beings today or in
recent memory

and so I'll just move on to Austin's
next and last question

wouldn't fascism be contrary to Buddhism
fascism would be clinging to nation and
culture which are inherently impermanent
well this is uh I think this is a

follow-up to a question I answered last
time I think on the last q a someone was
asking me if fascism was compatible with
Buddhism and the answer is still pretty
much the same I mean in in the Buddhist

time most countries were like autocratic
kingdoms that were fairly close to
Fascism already

um there have been fascists who endorsed
Buddhism the most famous being Julius
Evola

who I don't think he considered himself
to be a Buddhist although he his life
was changed by being introduced to
Buddhism and he certainly endorsed it as
uh a noble Aryan virile kind of uh
spiritual uh system that was suitable
for like the Aryan aristocracy of Europe
um but the thing the thing is that I
mean Buddhism can exist under any system
that allows it to exist

so

um like Marxism might be contrary to
Buddhism because Marxism is contrary to
any kind of spiritual system

um

but the fascism would be clinging to
nation and culture which are inherently
impermanent but a devout Buddhist a
serious practitioner renounces the world
so that he is renouncing nation and
culture

so

um it's just sort of like a fringe thing
that goes on it's it's like
like the heart of Buddhism isn't really
uh political it's not you know it's not
run by the government or any such thing

even though some place like Thailand
where the Sangha and the government are
closely related

um still

I mean Thailand's kind of under a
military dictatorship or has been on
numerous occasions

so yeah I don't see that fascism is
contrary to Buddhism I mean

I mean like Spain under uh Franco was uh
Catholic

in fact uh

I mean you could argue that uh

in like Medieval Times

or even like the the Roman Empire could
have been called more or less fascistic
and it was it was Christian and so

really it's the spirituality doesn't necessarily have to follow along with the the political ideology they're just in a way they're they're separate or and even if you've got like this autocratic King

who just declares you know everyone's going to be Buddhist weird well I just I I hereby decree that the country is going to convert to Buddhism which has happened in the past

um still I mean it's not I don't see how there's any necessary conflict because Buddhism arose in a time with autocratic Kings and you know some of them were just sociopaths

so yeah I really don't see any kind of
problem there

so the next question is from Mary
spelled m-e-r-r-y

and Mary says how can one experience not
craving for existence and not craving
for non-existence at the same time

so I think this is uh kind of a

follow-up on uh a doctrine of terravada

Buddhism about the three kinds of

craving there are three kinds of craving

craving for essential pleasure craving

for existence and craving for

non-existence

and um

so Mary is asking how can you not crave

for existence and not crave for

non-existence at the same time well you
just don't crave for anything
so you don't have any cravings for
anything you're not craving for further
existence and you're not craving for an
end to existence I mean you're just
taking each moment as it comes without
without craving anything you know
without setting yourself up against the
way things are you know just accept the
way things are and so you're not like
setting up any kind of friction with the
universe
so that was that was fairly simple
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from the lucid and this

is a surprisingly hard question to answer

Lutheran said Lucid says who is the wokest Buddhist you know

and I mean really I can't say that I know any woke Buddhists have you

obviously woke Buddhists don't want to have anything to do with me

the woke Buddhists will just uh there's there's a certain woke Buddhist monk who runs uh

a website kind of a Buddhist forum and

I've been told that he just deletes

like references to me just doesn't

matter of course because supposedly I'm a Nazi

but I mean

of Buddhists that I know of that
that venerable biku who might as well
remain unnamed or
partly because he's higher profile maybe
biku Bodhi he's pretty woke seems to me
but of the ones that I know personally
that would be a tough question I would
I'd have to say that
um when I lived in Bellingham Washington
and was temporarily
um interacting with the the local
Insight Meditation Society there
um I mean it could be it could be any
one of uh a fairly large number of those
um yeah it probably of the people that
I've met personally

that I have known not just met
uh it would probably be one of the
Buddhists in in Bellingham Washington
who were a member of the local Insight
Meditation group and um
yeah like college educated people in in
the Pacific Northwest tend to be fairly
left-leaning
and uh there's no telling how woke they
got I mean I I left before the real
Insanity started like that was around
2015 I guess I left before then so it's
hard to say I mean some of them might
have just turned into what caligulas or
something
and uh technically I would have known
them in the past anyway but really I I

can't say so I'll just move on to the
next question this is from Mr unofficial
and Mr unofficial says
what is the Buddhist definition of a
human

and that's kind of a good question
um

it's it could be taken from different
directions I mean

um Buddhism does not give like a
biological definition of a human

as far as I know I mean like in the in
the polytext there's there's no

um

there's no sutta where the Buddha or
anyone else is differentiating humans

from you know from any other species of animal

um and in a way we're we're kind of an animal that is capable of becoming enlightened I mean that would be that would define a human and that's sort of implied in the text like

um nagas who are like shape-shifting Cobra dragons are not allowed to be ordained as monks there's actually a rule about this

that because they are an animal they're not they're not allowed they're not able to become enlightened and so they're not allowed to be ordained as monks

so that would be one way of doing it but I mean ultimately it's all delusional

because

um from the Buddhist point of view no

actual human really exists

we're we're just a collection of the

five condas or the five aggregates

so we're us a human is from that point

of view a human is just a certain

collection of physicality

uh feelings perceptions will and

consciousness

that those are the five Aggregates that

compose a human being they compose other

beings also that aren't human

but

um just going with this kind of

definition it would be a certain kind of

you know collection of the five

Aggregates that

um you know walks on two legs and has

culture and

um

is capable at least potentially of

becoming enlightened

so

yeah there's not much anthropology

actually in uh in Buddhism so I'll just

move on to the next question also from

Mr unofficial

and Mr unofficial says what is your

opinion on cannabis and psychedelics for

spiritual growth how should they be used

for maximum benefit have you had any

profound psychedelic experiences in your

life well I was I touched on this uh to
a previous question about whether you go
to hell from smoking cannabis and uh
yeah I mean of of people of my
generation who became monks I think
probably most of them began with
cannabis and psychedelics maybe it's
different now I can't say but it's you
take cannabis and then psychedelics and
you have these profound mystical
experiences you see things in a way that
seems just as valid in its own way as
the usual normal waking State and it
kind of triangulates and it it gives you
the Insight but there's more than one
way of looking at reality and then it

causes an interest in
practicing meditative techniques where
you can expand the Consciousness and and
get into these profound states without
having to use the chemicals
so

I do think that if used wisely and not
just abused

or just use recreationally for mundane
reasons then uh it's it's very valuable
or it can be

and how should they be used for maximum
benefit is uh well you should use them
with uh like uh a desire for Spiritual
benefit to be a result of taking them I
mean if you just drop acid at a party or
something

um that that would not produce maximum benefit but if you go hiking alone out into the forest I used to do this it was like one of my earlier spiritual practices before I became a monk just hike alone out into a Wilderness Area and take acid and buy it by yourself out in the woods

uh in a quiet place where you won't be bothered you know you won't have to interact with other people there's no rules out there for you to break

you know there's no artificial rules

um yeah you can have you can have

profound experiences and then here's the question the last part of this question

is have you had any profound psychedelic experiences in your life almost every time not absolutely every time but almost every time I've ever taken LSD or mushrooms

it's like everything just becomes a manifestation of divinity it's just like divinity is the essence and you just have all these different forms of it you know it's just everything is like an emanation of God so to speak and that's usually my experience when I take something like LSD

is that you know every just everything just becomes a manifestation of divinity and that in itself is uh that is a profound experience

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Rambo
and brambo says did the Buddha teach
that biku should give blessings to
people how does that work

um

I'm not exactly
sure about mentions of blessings in the
text although certainly the Buddha
taught that because should send meta to
people and that's usually the way

um

people ask for blessings in in Burma
which is possibly the most Buddhist
country in the world just please send
meta sometimes they'll say you know

Superior which is like you know Sue pay
and it's like you know give a give a
gift but it's like the gift of a
blessing or the gift of Mata or you know
loving kindness you know benevolent
feeling well wishes
so definitely it's it's mentioned many
times in the text that because you just
feel love for everybody
and just sometimes I mean like if you're
doing meditation you're like beaming
love
to to individuals or to groups of people
or just in all directions
so that is probably more Orthodox than
you know the may you be well may you be
happy kind of a thing I mean just saying

may you be well may you be happy it's
like a formula for sending meta to so
that's also the blessing and the sending
of Mata are just the same essentially
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from chaplain
and Chaplin says are you making any
resolutions or do you have any plans for
the New Year
um no I really don't make resolutions I
kind of go with uh jidu krishnamurti on
on making resolutions it's like
um you just do do what you can and but
if you make some kind of resolution or
rule for yourself then
um you're setting yourself up for uh

like breaking rules and then just being
dishonest and hypocrisy and dashed
ideals and all that just just be
yourself

mindfully would be his approach

um I used to have a joke resolution I'd
make every year and that was I wasn't
going to smoke I made two resolutions
two joke resolutions every year this is
back when I was a young man one is I'm
not gonna smoke weed anymore and the
second one was I'm not gonna smoke weed
any less I'm going to smoke it just the
same

which is kind of an easy resolution to
keep

uh second part of this question is do

you have any plans for the New Year
other than uh just hanging out with my
sweetie at home not going out to any
parties or anything
going out and making noise at midnight
that's uh that's my plan for New Year's
Eve

um plans for the new year I may finally
um stop working in the warehouse at the
sheet metal shop and move up front and
start selling sheet metal

which is a job that was offered to me
back around July but things moved slow
in South Carolina

but uh yeah plans for the new year is
just continue forwards you know

continue on the same track

so I'll just move on to the next

question from chaplain and this is how

is the new year measured in Buddhism and

do they celebrate a new year

well

um just going with strict terravada

Buddhism not any national cultural

deviations from that

um the the year the Buddha the year of

the Buddhist era begins with the

Buddha's Enlightenment and so it's the

full moon of May or the full moon of

Cason in in Burmese which usually is in

May

would be um the beginning of the the

next Buddhist year

although Buddhist countries have
different ways of measuring New Year
like in uh India which isn't technically
Buddhist but also in Burma and in
Thailand
they uh they follow like medieval Indian
like astrology or astronomy
so in in Burma and Thailand their their
new years is
um nowadays New Year's Day would be
April 17th I'm pretty sure
and technically that is the day that the
sun passes through the Meridian
containing the Stars Zeta pisium
because back in in medieval India some
astronomer calculated that at the

beginning of the universe this you know
who knows how many zillions of years ago
that all the Sun the moon and all the
planets were in conjunction at the star
of Zeta pyceum and uh I think that is
the lunar Mansion of Ray Woody
so in Burma and Thailand their official
New Year's Day
um is around April 17th it's it's no
it's like a five-day transition when the
sun is passing through this lunar
mansion and uh in in Burmese it's called
dinjan and in Thailand it's called
songkran
and it's both it's just two
pronunciations of the same Sanskrit word
that means just crossing over it's like

the sun is crossing through this this
Meridian where

all the the sun moon and planets are all
in conjunction at the beginning of the
universe

but technically the Buddhist New Year is
um the day that the Buddha became
enlightened and started the wheel of
Dharma

uh rolling

so I'll just move on to chaplain's next
and third question

do you think the Dalai Lama is an arm of
the globalists used to control people
similar to how they use the rainbow Pope
to indoctrinate Catholics into Oak

Marxism

um I really am not a close follower of

The Dalai Lama

um

I think he has to some degree endorsed

the whole global warming hysteria partly

I think just due to like naivete he did

uh he did some kind of interview with

Greta tunberg I remember Brian Rue and I

did a video on it it was a relatively

popular one

um but I think that's not necessarily

being the same as an arm of the

globalist unless it's just an unwitting

one in that certain respect but in other

ways the Dalai Lama is very Politically

Incorrect for example he has said a

number of times that that the uh the
so-called refugees in Europe who are
coming from from Northern Africa and the
Middle East you should just go back to
where they came from the Europe is for
Europeans and that's certainly not what
the globalists want people to hear
and I think another thing that that kind
of counts against him being an arm of
the globalists is that obviously he's uh
sort of an anti-chinese figure and back
when you know the marxists and the
Communists were the bad guys in
mainstream Western culture you know he
was a hero but now he's kind of an
embarrassment because they're all

kissing the ass of the Chinese Communist
Party the globalists are

and so he's just seen as sort of a
problem for China which makes him a
problem for for the the globalists who
are kissing the Chinese behind

so yeah I I doubt that the Dalai Lama is
a stooge for for the globalists I mean
he might be used for propaganda purposes
he happens to say the right thing like
about global warming or something but uh
my relatively uneducated guess is that
um

yeah he's he's not really

so I'll just move on to the next
question which is the last question and
it is from pseudonym

and I'm guessing that that's not his
real name

and pseudonym says

I am hoping to hear your thoughts on an
idea the following is constructed around
the analogy of the path to Enlightenment
being analogous to summoning a great
Mountain metaphorical complements to
Evola

as I understand it if one renounces the
world and diligently follows the
Eightfold Path and lives by the vinaya
Buddhism can lead toward the upper
reaches of the mountain perhaps to the
Snow Line however the final push to the
summit for enlightenment rests on the

individual making their own way the
Buddhist past prepared the individual
for the challenge but ultimately they
are alone could it be that jidu
krishnamurti and others have provided
further direction to Aid in the final
push conversely to Simply crack open a
krishnamurti text with no dharmic
Foundation might that not be like
parachuting into the higher reaches of
the mountain in board shorts and
flip-flops please feel free to Riff on
this in any way that makes sense to you
thank you
well
um when I when I hear about
um spirituality and moving towards

Enlightenment compared to climbing a
mountain of course I think of Saint John
of the Cross and the ascent of Mount
Carmel and the whole path of the
mountain is

just nothing nothing nothing nothing
nothing you just follow the nothing
until you you reach the Perfection of
nothing

and then you're at the top of the
mountain

and uh he apparently got to the top of
it at least from I mean he speaks with
authority he seems to be anyway speaking
with authority in his in his writings

um

Buddhism on the other hand I mean there
may be mentions of it I don't remember
like

um becoming enlightened as being
compared with reaching the summit of
Mount meru

maybe not a good comparison because the
summit of Mount meru is where the the
toe attempts of Heaven is supposed to be
located and so that's nowhere near
becoming enlightened if you're just
getting into a heaven realm that's just
a few levels above us
uh

yeah it in a way it's kind of a
simplistic way of looking at it
comparing it to climbing a mountain

because

different people can become enlightened
at different stages it's not like you're
following a path till you reach the end
of the path because the path doesn't
have an end it's just that the path just
keeps going so you just follow the path
or you're climbing the mountain get
higher higher higher higher and you're
never going to reach the top because it
doesn't have a top

So eventually you just bail out sideways
and some people have to get to the most
refined mental States they have to
master fourth degree they have to be able
to sit there empty this cessation of

perception and feeling you know the the
concentration of this

oh what is it the signless concentration
they have to get to the the most refined
meditative States and master them and
sometimes even then they won't become
enlightened there's no guarantee but
some people they don't even have to get
to the first genres supposedly if you
can believe some of the texts there are
what are called dry visioned arahaunts
that uh haven't mastered Janna and
haven't gotten any any psychic powers
they're just enlightened without even
psychic powers or anything
so it's like if you compare it with a
ladder you're climbing the ladder and

you're getting into more and more subtle
mental States but sooner or later you
just realize that there's no there's no
top you're never going to reach the top
and then you just let go you just jump
off and that's it

and some people have to get much higher
than others so some people could become
enlightened when they're still in the
Foothills presumably

and that seems to be the way it is for
Western people who like have some kind
of experience that like an Awakening
experience it just hits them over the
head you know they're just ignore me a
lot of them like eckhartola assuming you

know we don't we don't have to assume
that he's fully enlightened but just and
he had this Awakening experience without
without having been a meditator or
anything first even Ramana maharshi was
like that he wasn't a meditator he was
just an ordinary high school student
and uh he just had this crisis that just
slammed him into enlightenment
so it doesn't work as as a like the
whole metaphor of climbing the mountain
it doesn't really fit very well because
um I mean there's no top to the mountain
is is Enlightenment he just is
completely off the scale it's completely
out of the system Nirvana is not one of
the 31 planes of existence it's not a

plane of existence at all it transcends
existence

and that Transcendence can happen you
know just about any time any point
although it becomes more and more likely
the more advanced your your mental
States become the more subtle they
become

so let's see I kind of answered part of
the question anyway

see rests on the individual making yeah

I don't think I think Buddhism if you

practice it correctly I mean it can take
you all the way to Enlightenment

um at least it gets you to the point

where you've gotten all you need to get

and you can just let go

and then that's it

um in Buddhism there's there's more talk
about crossing a flood than uh climbing
a mountain as a metaphor for
enlightenment and you cross the flood
with the raft of Dharma and then you
throw the raft away because you don't
need it anymore

but I do think that a lot of Buddhists
have become enlightened through
practicing Buddhism without having to
depend on or without having to use any
other any other system

um

let's see conversely do I simply cracked
open a krishnamurti text with no dharmic

Foundation might that not be like
parachuting into the higher reaches of
the mountain in board shorts and
flip-flops

um yeah I don't think if someone who's
unprepared reads a krishnamurti book
I mean it'd be like reading a physics
text you've got some some Normie you
know who who doesn't have a college
education or anything he he's just gonna
be over his head he's just not going to
get it

um if you get it you're ready to get it
I assume

but um

yeah I do think that uh just practicing

like Orthodox taravana or maybe slightly
unorthodox terrible like old-fashioned
taravada the way it was taught in the
early days without all the the later
accretions I think that would be
sufficient if one's temperament is
attuned to that other people might have
a different kind of temperament they
might need a different kind of path
but uh terravala Buddhism
um not you know what it has become
necessarily but what it what it still
can be like the essence of it distilled
from the text that is that our you know
this Essence still is followed by some
of the best monks
but uh yeah I think this is sufficient

and that was the last question
so I'm done I won't answer anymore
because there aren't anymore
so uh I hope I did a a decent job of
answering these questions I hope I
didn't completely mess up any of them
and uh if you have any more questions
about Buddhism or spirituality
philosophy meditation Burma me
personally anything you think I might be
able to answer just feel free to include
your question in in the comments below
if you have access to my subscribe Star
channel you can leave questions there if
you have access to the Discord server
associated with the

um subscribe to our Channel you can
leave leave questions there
um I I caution you not to just leave
questions in random places because they
might not wind up on the list I might
just Overlook like if there's a question
put under like a random video of mine
that isn't a q a video or isn't the
latest one
um I can't guarantee that I'll I'll
remember to include that on the list
and um if you haven't subscribed already
please do so
and uh hit the like button and uh take a
look at the URL links including the uh
the links to my books that are for sale
on Amazon

and be happy

hello and welcome to episode 39 I think of question and answer and we're getting into high numbers so I'm in my ability to count may start to falter pretty soon when we're getting up into such high numbers I mean I took math in school and I was able to count all the way up to many

but um 39 I mean it's it's it's many that's that's many and we got many questions too and I do apologize for uh the uh Hiatus I went on a kind of vacation from YouTube

but now I'm back

and I'm better than ever sort of so I'll just uh start answering

questions here

and the first question is from Mary

spelled m-e-r-r-y

and uh

wait a minute before I answer Mary's

questions I want to address sort of a

request it was a it wasn't a q a

question it wasn't exactly a cue but it

was a request with regard to q a from a

monk who lives I think in Thailand

and he's either a western monk I assume

he's a western monk if he's not a

western monk then he is an Asian monk

with a Mastery of the English language

he didn't really specify what his

ethnicity was which I mean it's not

really all that important but he was

asking me to do videos on how to make robes and like the proper way of going for almost round and so forth for for monks for ordained monks and I know about this stuff and I've been toying with the idea of writing an article on how to make robes because most monks really don't know like the really ancient way of making robes um

but it's it's seems a little awkward to me to be giving instructions to monks on how to do their job when I'm not a monk anymore but it is a good idea and I think I'll eventually get to at least the Rogue one he was asking me about a

number of things

um he was requesting that I do videos on that sort of thing and it could be interesting have a lay person a guy wearing a shirt and all that talking about the proper way of making monks robes and so forth as far as I knew I was the only monk in all of Burma who was making robes like completely in accordance with the ancient rules of monastic discipline

but um

I can talk about that later so let's get back to Mary here

and Mary's first question is

16 near the end and digging nikaya 16 by the way is the Maha uh Pari nibana suta

which is

um discussing the Buddha's last days and
his death

anyway in D16 near the end the Buddha
says if it wishes after my passing the
Sangha May abolish the Lesser and minor
training rules which of the rules are
considered minor and which major well if
you continue reading the

uh it might be in the in the Winnie at
the chulawaga the official account of
the First Council

you may find that even the arhans the
500 arahants who presided of this did
not agree on which rules are considered
minor and which are major

at the very

at the very least we can assume that the

ducatā offenses which are the lowest

level of offenses offenses

would be

um minor I mean if any rules are minor

it would be the ones you know don't talk

with your mouth full

um

don't teach dhamma to someone who has

shoes on which is broken all the time in

the West but there is a rule saying a

monk should not teach dhamma to someone

who is wearing shoes but just because in

Ancient India it was a sign of respect

to take your shoes off when approaching

a holy man or so forth and um so there's

all these I mean there's lots and lots
of them hundreds of minor rules like
that and at the very least those could
go I suppose

um there were some according to the
official

um tradition that there were some
arahants who are considering anything
except for the four paragicas to be
lesser and minor but no I don't think so
telling lies drinking alcohol killing
animals steel well I guess stealing
would be parajika so long as it's above
a certain value

um

so yeah I mean if even the arahatz who

were the the Buddha's disciples could not agree because it is vague I mean it's not saying uh you know anything below the level of um you know pachidia offenses would be lesser and minor but I mean it's a safe bet to to assume that the most minor ones

um just going with severity you know there's different levels of rules you know at the very top you've got the four paragica rules and if any monk breaks those he's just automatically excommunicated even if nobody finds out he might not even know that he's excommunicated if he's really ignorant of the rules below that you've got

sangari sesa which are also considered to be uh Guru or or weighty serious offenses so I assume those also wouldn't be lesser and minor and that would include

um you know fondling a woman with with one's mind perverted with by lust or or masturbating to orgasm having having an orgasm on purpose

um talking dirty talking you know lewd talk to a woman there's a few obscure ones like siding with the monk who's causing a causing a Schism this kind of thing

um yeah those are serious below that you've got Tula Chaya which I mean the

word Tula means like you know weighty or
or heavy or serious so two lechai events
is also probably are are not lesser and
minor and that would include such things
as trying to commit aparajika or Sangha
di sesa offense and then failing
um or or like eating human flesh I think
is a tool offense cutting off one's own
penis is it too late offense
um there is there's not a list of them
in the text but you have to kind of look
around every once in a while especially
in uh the the ancient commentary which
is now canonical to the the parimoka
rules it's mostly any monk who's trying
to commit one of the really serious ones
you know the first two categories but

fails for some reason that would be Tula
China then below that you've got
pachidia which is in two groups you've
got nisagi up at GTO and just regular
pachidia

means before you can confess the offense
you have to get rid of whatever it is
that you are possessing that is not
Kosher and one of the main ones is money
money to for a monk to own money or have
in his possession is it too late or a
Anisa offense he has to relinquish the
money and then he has to make confession
if you make confession without
relinquishing the money it's just
invalid it's it has no effect

and so I mean maybe pachy but even pachy
the offenses that includes killing
animals telling lies
drinking alcohol this kind of a thing so
I would my own personal guess would be
it would be ducata offenses

um

and uh do Boston offenses and there's
only one dubosity of incidents making a
joke at somebody else's expense
so yeah that's that's what I would say
and then there's oh there's one more
category and I'm uh potty
days and they're very four obscure ones
and Nobody Breaks them anymore
um I want to I think at least one of
them has to do with uh a bossy bikuni

like the monks are invited to a house or
they're you know they're eating in
public somewhere and you've got a a nun
who is like bossing the the lay people
around telling them you know you should
offer more of that and less of this and
you know this kind of thing and the
monks there have to tell her to be quiet
and if they don't they've committed an
offense by not telling none to be quiet
because she's being bossy with the lay
people at meal time or something
but uh as I say those those never get
broken anymore

so

I think I answered that one you got lots

of questions I probably shouldn't be uh
going too in depth on some of these
um so I'll just uh move on to Mary's
next question which is a question that
Mary asked last time which somehow
didn't get on the list
and Mary asked I mean it was sort of
like a a raunchy joke was included in
the first version of this question and I
couldn't find it I mean Mary requested
that I include the original version of
the question with the raunchy joke but I
I seriously could not find it it's like
YouTube has these weird things where
comments will appear and disappear
it was like that
so anyway

s second question here this is the
redacted repeated version

what are your thoughts on Realms of
existence can it be explained within
just the human realm I mean maybe an
addict can be considered a Hungry Ghost
Deva is someone like rich and famous
movie stars some poor people are born
into circumstances that clearly clearly
resemble hell and humans are like normal
run-of-the-mill humans

well I mean you can say that that
humanity is sort of like a a microcosm
of some of the main Realms in Buddhist
cosmology maybe you know there might be
no sphere of nothingness you know the

Devas of existing in this formless
Brahma realm you know the Spear of
infinite

Consciousness or something
um yeah they might not have
Representatives

uh in the human race but it is true I've
noticed myself that I mean there are
some places that are there are like hell
Realms you know like some like crack
houses or something I've been in a few
places I've never been in a crack house
but there are some places you go there
and it's I mean it really is like hell
uh I would assume some mental
institutions might be kind of like that
some old folks homes are kind of like

that

um but nevertheless you could sort of
use it as an analogy for the human realm
but that's really not what

um the the 31 planes of existence are
really referring to

that this universe is very very big
and there's all kinds of beings I mean
like animals obviously those are of all
the 31 planes of existence aside from
the human Realm

animals are the most uh
irrefutable

those are obviously here on the planet
with us and are visible you know you can
you know touch them and weigh them on a

scale that kind of a thing

so

yeah I mean you can say that

um some

some people are like Davis you know

Divas you know which means god you know

some of the some of the beautiful people

I've I've heard some Hindu some Hindu

um Guru or Swami was talking about how

um like Marin County California is kind

of like a Deva realm where people are

out you know drinking their lattes and

doing yoga on the beach and all that

kind of stuff but again the 31 planes of

existence are to be taken literally and

so there are

um just all I mean

anything you can imagine is existing in this universe somewhere somehow and a lot of things we can't imagine are also out there and

it may be that the heaven Realms and the hell realms for example are not exactly like they're described in the books but I I'm fairly confident that there are

um you know heaven-like Realms that are like better than the one we're in now and then there are worse ones

so

I'll just move on to the next question and this is with regard to one of the earliest videos I ever put on YouTube

the sermon of the stinkwood tree maybe
if I think of it I'll leave the link
otherwise if you go to my videos on my
channel my YouTube channel and just
scroll

all the way down to the bottom to the
ones that were made in 2011 when I was
still in Burma

hadn't come back to America yet to uh
seek my fortune

there's this one called the sermon of
the stinkwood tree and I'm I had just
finished going for alms I was a monk at
the time in Burma

just finished going for alms and I had
these plastic bags they're called in
Burmese it's a poly

polypropylene it's the ones that are
photodegradable

and they're called chit chip because
they make the crinkly sound

anyway

um I'd go for alms and I was relatively
famous

as a monk in that area so I'd go for
Amazon there'd just be a long line of
people

and um

each person would get to put in like one
little cup or one spoon depending on how
many there were

um of rice and a little bit of Curry

but sometimes they'd want to offer like

a banana or like a some bread or a piece of cake or something fruit any kind of fruit really and it just wouldn't all fit in the bowl I've got a big bowl I mean it's that bowl back there holds more than a gallon

but still when 60 people are all wanting to offer food and bananas and stuff um yeah it just wouldn't all fit so I started carrying a plastic bag to have the extra food and just put the extra food in that

um not extra rice and Curry but just the you know the cakes and the cookies and the fruit and stuff so that's what it was

and then I just after I'd get my bowl

put back into the bag I'd uh walk back
to my cave and uh eat my food
and so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from pseudonym
and again I'm guessing that pseudonym is
not his real name
and pseudonym says
one very simplistic critique of Buddhism
is noting the contradiction that you
desire to not desire similarly
practicing Buddhism to reduce stress be
happier or even to seek Enlightenment as
an achievement to tackle or misguided
yet Enlightenment remains as the Target
or perhaps the object of Desire of
Buddhist practice is this a real

contradiction or in what ways is this critique missing the Mark can you help untangle this knot well not all monks even I mean let's just set aside the drones and the clowns and the crooks and you know just

lazy people that you know they're not really even trying just set those aside they do exist in the Sangha we'll just we'll just ignore those but even the seriously practicing monks not all of them

are like striving for this goal of Nirvana

because some of them it's just they feel like it's a duty to practice you know it's like their sacred duty to practice

dhamma as well as they can so that is
you know that's like their goal is just
practice as well as they can some people
they just like to meditate they like to
live a simple austere life that was
pretty much my situation

um and so they just practice because of
that

uh I I have warned

um for for many years I mean beware of
goal-oriented Dharma you know if you're
not in the present moment but you're
like aiming at something in the distant
future or maybe even the near future as
long as you're not here in the present
moment then you're not practicing

correctly I mean if you're doing this in
order to get something later
then yeah I mean you're already
misguided to some degree which reminds
me of I think it's one of the last
um

a camera what they're in in Spinoza's
ethics you know he's got it set up like
a Euclid so it's one of the last
theorems or whatever it is that you
prove in in geometry

that um uh virtue is its own reward
you're not being virtuous in order to
get into heaven or whatever it's just
virtue is its own reward and Dharma
practice really is its own reward
and so long as you you retain that kind

of attitude your dumb of practice will
be more fruitful I think not that you
should be trying doing it in order for
the Donald practice to be more fruitful
but still

there are a lot of monks who are
striving ardently earnestly for nibana
or Nirvana or Enlightenment and the
thing is the more you progress and we'll
get to this later on there's another
question if I remember correctly that
kind of uh applies to this
where if let's say you you're striving
for enlightenment just
single-mindedly you know and so all your
other Cravings kind of go away or or you

know they're they're sublimated or
they're just you know rejected or
whatever and you've got this one craving
left you know you don't crave girls
anymore you don't crave rock and roll
and ice cream and partying with your
your old friends you're not craving a
book collection

um you know all you want is

Enlightenment and so you've reduced the
number of your attachments and desires
down to this one big one and then you
try and you try and you try but because
you still have this clinging you can't
become enlightened because that's that's
like your last obstacle So eventually
you get to this point it could be like

uh an Insight moment where you just
realize you just let everything go or it
could just be like absolute despair you
know I just can't do this anymore you
just kind of cast it away and that's it
I mean you've thrown away the last
attachment

so Enlightenment can happen that way
so

on the one hand you're better off not
setting up a goal

um as a purpose for practicing it works
for some people I suppose if if we go to
the second route that I just explained
where it's this thing this last
attachment you know you you sublimate

all of your other attachments for this
one holy sacred ideal
and then of course because you have the
attachment you can't get there you can't
attain it and then finally for whatever
reason positive or negative you cast
that aside too and
click
so that can work too
but um
yeah Desiring not to desire I mean it
can kind of work it can move you in that
direction but of course obviously if
you're Desiring not to desire you're
never going to reach non-desire until
you eventually cast aside the desire not
to desire and that may be at a

relatively advanced level

so that that have that can happen too

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from I'm pretty sure

his name in English is Yuichiro although

his name is in Japanese

um letters

what do you call them

something grams I don't know what are

Japanese letters called con there's

kanji and then there's like one or two

other ones

so anyway

Yuichiro I think

says this

and some of these questions I haven't

read yet so this is almost like I'm
being live streamed and answering
questions that way
this has been suggested before but maybe
there's some way Buddhism can be
modified for the West I've heard
suggestions like food fusing Buddhism
with a native paganism like it did in
Asian countries unfortunately European
paganism is basically dead and I don't
see it coming back Christianity has to
be contended with Semitic religions are
intolerant and must either absorb or
destroy other religions like the Borg
I'm wondering if there's any way for
Buddhism to coexist with Christianity
given this fact in China Buddhism and

taoism coexist

similarly in Japan Buddhism and

Shintoism coexist but neither Shintoism

nor taoism are as completely intolerant

of other religions as Christianity it's

also possible that Christianity will die

out given its incompatibility with

science its Central claim is an

empirical claim for which there is no

evidence however the anti-globalist

right is Christian dominated and I want

them to win for political reasons even

though it's extremely unlikely but if

they win Christianity will be dominant

again and most of these people are

definitely for a theocracy and banning

other religions do you have any thoughts
on this call it the final solution to
the Christian question for cax
well

um surprisingly

the monastic schools of Christianity

which in the west is mostly Roman

Catholicism although there's also

Orthodox Christianity they are much more

friendly towards Buddhism just because

there's so much more overlap when you

get into proticism I mean one of the

first things the Protestants did when

they when they started up protestantism

was to just ban monasticism which is

practically Banning the highest levels

of the religious practice of the

spiritual practice and just Banning
almost the more advanced Spiritual
Development into like sainthood that
kind of a thing
so there are
um like religious conventions where
Buddhist monks will be asked to come and
give like sermons to Christian priests
and monks for example
um I had a Roman Catholic priest
come to my cave and Burma wants dressed
as a monk I mean he was ordained I think
he was ordained as a novice even though
he was still a castling monk they're
really interested in that because they
they like the meditation they want

advice on meditation and most of the
meditation and I told this to the monk I
mean to the Christian or the the
Catholic priest it's like you know
almost all of the meditation techniques
you know the basic ones are included in
in Roman Catholicism and why don't you
just practice the Roman Catholicism you
know the the meditation and mindfulness
and so forth in in Catholicism and he
said that in Roman Catholicism maybe
it's this way of Orthodoxy too
it's more or less esoteric it's secret I
mean you have to be ordained into a
contemplative order of monks or nuns in
order to be taught the stuff whereas in
Buddhism it's it's for free you know you

just someone can come in off the street
and and join

um a Meditation Retreat in some cases

so it's more available

in Buddhism

um but there is a lot of friendly

feeling and and Christianity

um a lot of Roman Catholics you know

like ordained ones consider the Buddha

himself to be a Catholic saint

josephat technically it was a previous

life from ajotica story that made it to

Europe over the the Caravan routes and

this this story about this saintly wise

man

um it was just considered to be true and

the the Europeans just considered him to be so wise and saintly that he must have been a good Christian so he wound up being canonized as a saint

so I mean there is there are certain schools of Christianity I mean we can set aside Unitarianism that accepts pretty much everything because they've just gone off the deep end lately it seems to me politically at least a lot of them have whereas this like leftist politics and new age and you know lgbtq stuff instead of you know the actual you know spiritual stuff that you know you would expect in a sermon

um another possibility would be some kind of Western philosophy like a a

Resurgence of or just a reinvention of
something like stoicism or ancient
cynicism something like that could be
compatible with Buddhism

but um

the more Fundamentalist

sects

of Christianity and

um Islam yeah I think Yuichiro is right
that they wouldn't really be willing to
play ball and as for Jews in Buddhism I
mean

the jūbu so-called

is is a phenomenon but um

it's not so much a combination of
Judaism with

Buddhism is just sort of like the
for the most part it's sort of like the
Socialist Tendencies of of a Jewish
person who has abandoned religious
Judaism still has like the cultural
aspects of some aspects of it who then
enters Buddhism and then just starts
promulgating socialism and so forth but
so that's that's not that's not working
I mean I'd say
many or most of the people that watch
these videos
um you know they've got no use for for
that sort of thing where you've got
another religion kind of infiltrating
um Buddhism and and or or even you or
essentially cultural Marxism

um infiltrating Buddhism and just
completely mucking it all up

so

yeah

I I mean realistically

I don't see Buddhism

integrating with Christianity in the

west I mean there could be sort of like

a a friendship pact where you know they

both agree okay you're better off

religious trying to be a good person

trying to do the right thing than just

you know being a complete degenerate and

you know they do have like these World

religious forums where people come

together and you know the Dalai Lama

speaks and the you know the Archbishop
of whatever speaks and you know they're
all like agreeing and not not very much
ever gets accomplished you know but at
least they're showing friendship towards
each other

but uh I think the only way Christianity
would adopt Buddhism would be in parts
and pieces where they're just adopting
the meditation techniques or whatever
so but I mean that's kind of the way
it's it's going in America anyway
so yeah it's it's uh

I think the best thing we can do is is
just wait and see what happens because
something's gonna happen
you just have to wait and see or if

anyone has any brilliant ideas on on how
to make and happen then you can do that
too

but I'm just going to move on to the
next question this is from weird Flex

I guess this is like some kind of slang
that I completely missed out on because
I was in Burma for 30 or 20 something
years weird Flex I guess it's some kind
of actual word so it's really not this
person's name

and weird Flex

says what is the shape of your practice
today you've you've written about
mindfulness in the mundane but does your
Dharma practice extend beyond that are

you continuing to chant meditate or
observe upulsatum

well with regard to formal meditation
like sitting cross-legged I don't do it
anymore I honestly confess

and the reason for that plainly stated
is I got as far with it as I could even
when like I was a full-time meditator

you know I'm meditating several hours a
day I just got to this point where I
would have to try hard just to stay

where I was it was like the Red Queen in
in Wonderland who has to run as fast as
you can just to stay in the same place

and as a layperson you know just
part-time meditator

sitting sitting across like I mean I I

wouldn't come anywhere close to some of
the mental States I cultivated very
strenuously when living alone in a cave
in a forest in Asia

so

yeah though I don't do formal sitting
meditation practice anymore although I
still do

um mindfulness

and uh like oming oming is just some
weird spontaneous thing that comes up
with me sometimes so I can I can be
owning spontaneously and I do chant a
little bit I I've chanted The Meta suit
I've blessed the metal shop where I work
um chanting the metal suited there

quietly you know when when I'm just
closing and there's nobody else there
and observing the posted I think today
as you posted on the full moon day but
um

I don't behave any differently on
impulse of 10 days so I don't really
observe it I may acknowledge that it's
supposed to talk that's as far as it
goes

so mainly what I'm doing is I'm just um
trying to apply what I cultivated as a
monk to a life in a more blatant version
of samsara I mean it's also I'm sorry
even a a meditator's cell is samsara but
um

I'm sort of at a more advanced level

or it's like a more challenging level
more difficult level I should say
and I'm just doing the best I can
obviously I haven't totally uh abandoned
or forgotten what I've learned
so I'll just move on to the next
question and weird Flex uh weird flex's
second question

what was your closest brush with death
which is kind of an interesting question
and it's surprisingly difficult to
answer because sometimes you don't know
I mean I've come close to car wrecks
before I'm like

um

I mean usually when I was when I was a

teenager and drove like a maniac anyway
you know you can be doing 70 and hit a
patch of black ice and just start like
spinning down the highway and that kind
of thing I've done that a couple times
um whether that was my closest brush
with death or not I don't know

um the first time I got malaria I was I
was pretty messed up I had I mean the
second time I got malaria when I wasn't
nearly as sick because the first time I
had like a fever of 105 degrees

Fahrenheit

um yeah I was very sick the first time
if I hadn't taken the pills then I I
certainly would have died probably ever
I had malaria like seven times always

the worst kind probably every time if I
didn't take the medication I would have
died from it

um so it could be that

so it'd be my closest brush with death

that I know of you know who knows I mean

you know maybe he's a bullet and just

missed me and I wasn't even paying

attention or something but um

yeah it'd either be the first time I had

malaria or one of the times when I was

like a a teenager who drove like a

maniac and almost gotten a just a huge

car wreck one of those times

so I'll just move on a nice question and

this is from Johannes

or Johannes Johannes I think

and you wanna says

I was wondering how is just noting like

it's often practiced in the mahasy

tradition compatible with Noble effort

where you should stop a negative State

of Mind as soon as it arises and

generate good ones

well the two are I mean they just

overlap I mean this this kind of noble

effort in mahasi Tradition they also had

what was called heroic effort which

meant that you just keep meditating no

matter how bad the pain in your knee is

or in your hip or your ankle even if you

think you're going to die

then you just keep sitting there

meditating until the hour is up
but uh here the noble effort is just if
you start having a an inappropriate or
unskillful or unwholesome thought you
just note it and Let It Go I mean that's
that's mahasi tradition right there
and just note it Let It Go note it let
it go whatever arises it can be even
wholesome thoughts you know you're
thinking you know praise the Buddha or
whatever just note it let it go whatever
arises just note it and let it go
and letting it go doesn't mean just
flinging it away from you in aversion
it's just
Let It Go

so it wouldn't be I mean the good thoughts that arise here in johannes's question uh where you should stop a negative State of Mind as soon as it arises and generate good ones I mean the good thought is just the the mindfulness I mean that's the good mental state anyway because all thoughts you just note them and let them go note them and let them go

so

let's see

so I think I answered that one so I'll move on to johannes's next question here and you want to say as my second question would be what are your personal thoughts on the wipasana movement that

has established itself around the teaching of goenka I find the teaching and the way of practice very appealing and in line with my personal Spiritual Development has been like but then again they seem to be very discriminating against any other tradition which basically means everything that isn't going to from as far as I can tell do you have any personal experience regarding them in their style of practice

well I've never attended a goenka retreat I've known a lot of Veteran going to meditators some of whom became monks

and um I've read a few of goinka's books
you know I know what it's about I've had
it explained to me by people who have
done it that kind of thing

and uh one of the last monasteries I
looked at in Burma had a going to center
right next door

uh

but um yeah I used to say that the
goenka people were like the Jehovah
Witnesses of Buddhism because it is
really true they have sort of uh you
know ours is the is the true way you
know ours is the only way and I've been
told that uh among the going to people
if if some veteran meditator drops away
you know he tries some other tradition

or something he just gets shunned like
in in the Jehovah's Witnesses where they
just get shunned you know they just you
don't talk to them they're just dead
so there is that

although the going to Method obviously
appeals to a lot of people all over the
world because it's very successful and
uh to their credit they don't charge
money for their Retreats they just say
you know if you think this is was of
value to you then you know if you donate
money you're helping the next person you
know if you think it's it's good for
somebody to be able to do this without
having to pay for it and you know you

can pay for you know somebody the next person who comes along who's be sitting in your spot that kind of a thing and it is very simplistic so

um a lot of going to meditators you know or I should say a lot of Western monks start with going to and then there they move on to something

um

more multi-dimensional more well-rounded because goenka really is it's like a stripped down version of terravano it's it's in some ways very simplistic and I'm skeptical of whether it how far it can take you in in meditation

um the very fact that they are sort of Jehovah's witnessing kind of almost like

fanatical about their method

like I I've I've seen that um the goenka

tradition the goinka organization the

going to system published

um of their own version of the

polytopitica in the original Pali and

this the teachings that were like

emphasized by going to himself were all

in red ink which is kind of strange

but it I would say that it's it's a good

method to start with I mean it a lot of

people get a lot out of it I've had

people I've talked to a few people that

you know their lives were changed for

the better

um just from doing a going to retreat

so I mean just sitting there 10 days of
intensive meditation for someone who's
never done it before you know they might
be all messed up and they're finally
having to look into their own mind
instead of outwards at the you know
their phone and the TV screen and all
the other stuff they're just turning
inward introspecting
um for 10 days just rigorous and then
going to method does emphasize
discipline it's not like you can you can
meditate when you want and walk back and
forth when you want and you know go do
your other things when you want it's not
like that
so

it's good as an elementary introduction
to Buddhist Meditation

and it may be that I mean it may be good
up to an intermediate level but I really
don't think that it's uh it really
contains it within it the the most
advanced

teachings or at least the most advanced
levels of progress in in meditation
so

I think I'll just move on to the next um

I mean with regard to

um how the goenka method is conducted

um you'd probably be better off uh just

reading up on it or something and it's

like the the standard Retreat is like

the first third of it is is like samata
where you're just watching the breath
and then after that you're doing body
scanning where you're just your body is
divided up into into

Parts you just like your head area you
know you you just wait until there's a
sensation like a bodily sensation there
and then you note it and then you move
on to the next part of your body until
you feel something there and you move on
to the next and um it's not really
described that way in the poly text it's
it's just sort of a variation on on some
kind of mindfulness
but um

yeah I mean if you're really interested

the best my best advice you can go do a
10-day course

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from Austin

and Austin says

thoughts on the mind being an epic

phenomenon

well

personally I would say that

the brain is more of an EP a phenomenon

of Mind than the mind is an

epiphenomenon of the brain

I guess for those of you who aren't

familiar with

the term or the idea of the mind being

EPA phenomenon there are

scientists or philosophers of science
or just philosophers who consider
Consciousness to be just kind of an
incidental side effect of brain function
so it's an Epi phenomenon it's just sort
of incidental you know this sort of
accidentally happened but I mean the
brain still works so it's it's not
really a problem

um but I'm not a materialist

and I think it's at least as true that
the brain itself is an epiphenomenon of
consciousness

um you know there would be no brain if
there was no perceiving consciousness to
identify it

uh from just from the scientific point

of view it's it's hard to say really I
mean

does the Mind itself I mean just setting
aside brain function I mean does the
Mind add anything

um does it enhance brain function and
and anyway

um so I mean I can I can adopt a
scientific point of view I was I have a
degree in biology so you can you can go
into science mode or scientific realism
mode materialism mode then try to
explain things that way and then I mean
the mind being an epiphenomenon of the
brain function of just you know chemist
electrochemical reactions in the brain

it makes sense

from uh from that point of view

although

um I do not think that the brain creates
consciousness

my scientific theory or hypothesis I

suppose is that Consciousness just

pervades the universe is what what a

physicist calls energy

is is a very very Elemental simple form

of what a psychologist calls

Consciousness that the universe is

conscious it doesn't think you know like

a hydrogen atom isn't thinking it's not

sitting there contemplating or

philosophizing but it's just like this

Elemental spark of Consciousness and

what a brain does just again going with
the whole scientific realist
um paradigm

it does sort of to Consciousness what a
computer does to electricity it doesn't
create the electricity a computer
doesn't but it takes the electricity and
organizes it and complexifies it if
that's a word complexifies it and then
utilizes it

and that's and that's sort of what the
brain could be said to do with
consciousness

instead of just this

um unthinking primordial sort of
Consciousness it it takes and

complicates it it organizes it and then
is able to utilize that for the purpose
of uh Staying Alive long enough to make
babies

but personally deep down

I'm just not a materialist and I really
think the mind is more real than the
brain is

and I mean it's just kind of weird that
science will I mean some scientists like
the behaviorists of the 20th century
just rejected the existence of Mind
altogether

they just you know it's just

I mean they tried to just deny its
existence some of them

when obviously I mean the one thing that

even the most radical skeptic has to
acknowledge is the the immediate
experience of Consciousness I mean if
there's anything at all is real
then it's the subjective experience of
consciousness

at least anything discreet you know as
aside from the absolute

so I'll just move on to Austin's next
question

and uh the next question is thoughts on
UG Krishnamurti and his skepticism of
Enlightenment well I really don't know
all that much about ug Krishna Murray I
have a book by him on this computer but
I haven't read it yet

um almost all that I know about
krishnamurti is um from a book called
goner it was one of his attendants wrote
a kind of autobiography about his
interactions with krishnamurti and uh so
CR ug krishnamurti not J krishnamurti
but you g krishnamurti i mean he really
wasn't extremely different from J
krishnamurti they both have this idea of
almost like
it's almost like nihilism it's you know
it's it's like
trying to live a religious life is
in in a way it's just kind of dishonest
you know it's trying to live up to
ideals just leads to failure and
hypocrisy and

uh I mean even Jay Christian would talk like that ug was even more radical he was called a spiritual terrorist and um well with regard to um his skepticism of enlightenment that's that's kind of interesting because although I haven't read about ug krishnamurtis skepticism of Enlightenment that I can recall uh I assume he's just maybe he's saying that there just is no Enlightenment and one of my favorite spiritual teachers who's still alive is Paul Lowe he's very old now and I think he's retired and isn't doing public teaching anymore but

he was he said the same thing that there really is no state of enlightenment that this is it I mean just the way we are now this this is it although he was considered by some to be enlightened and Yuji krishnamurti also is considered by some to be enlightened in fact his body apparently underwent a kind of like a a return to a prepubescent state you know it's like he lost his puberty or something when when he had his experience Yuji krishnamurti that is not not Paul Lowe uh so I mean yeah and there's something to the idea that there really is no state

of Enlightenment because
a state would be something some sorry
something within the context of this
world and Nirvana or Nirvana is just
completely off the scale so I can agree
with the the paradoxical idea that from
a samsaric point of view there just is
no enlightenment

because Ultimate Reality it has
practically nothing to do with the
virtual reality of you know having a
body in an individual mind and thinking
that you're separate from everything
else and all that it's just completely
transcending that
and

even an enlightened being I mean they
still have the body and the mind
apparently

and so it's it's

um I mean it's it's like a paradox in
Mahayana Buddhism especially

where they're saying well there kind of
is Enlightenment but there's no moment
of Enlightenment and it doesn't actually
happen

but it's it's still it's I mean you
can't even see that it exists because
existence is part of this duality of
existence and non-existence

so it's just completely off the scale
and so I can

kind of grock It kind of sympathize with

the idea that in this world in samsara
there just is no actual Enlightenment
and from an unenlightened point of view
you look at an enlightened being you're
just going to be like picking apart the
foibles that you perceive
and

I mean there's that too I mean even an
enlightened being let's just assume that
somebody can become enlightened
you know for the sake of argument let's
just assume that there are enlightened
beings an unenlightened person looks at
them they're just going to see another
unlike person because they just cannot I
mean they lack the sensitivity or the

wisdom to get past this The Superficial
human stuff

and you know like neem karoli Baba he's
and if anyone was enlightened in the
20th century he'd be one of my my main
guesses

and he I mean he didn't act like an
enlightened being

he'd just do mind-blowing stuff and just
read your mind and all that kind of
thing but the rest of the time he's just
like talking and yelling and laughing
and throwing things and hitting people
and

he's still a human he's still it's like
all the human stuff is still there it's
just he wasn't identified with it

anymore

or some such

so

I guess that'll be my answer to uh

ug Krishna Meridian is skepticism of

Enlightenment and so I'll move on to

Austin's next question

and Austin says can you speak on this

accounting problem of unenlightened

beings

continually being born into human

existence

given infinite time you need to expect

there to be a lot more beings breaking

out of the realm of samsara and not an

increasing human population well that's

a good question and I have considered
this

numerous times over the past decades

Buddhism teaches

that the Universe really has no
discernible beginning

I mean it's essentially samsara has been
here forever and ever and ever

if it's here at all it's it's been here
forever has no beginning presumably no
end

and there are beings that become
enlightened so you think that over an
infinite period of time if beings are
continually getting enlightened that
some sort of would eventually just empty
out

that there'd be fewer and fewer beings
which apparently is not the case
so again I mean you can say that there's
the
um the Paradox of Enlightenment just not
existing in samsara which would prevent
any being at least from a samsaric
perspective from escaping
but
um there are a few non-buddhist
explanations that I find intriguing
and there are two explanations I found
them in both in the same weird
mind-blowing book called Seth speaks
it's written by a woman named Jane
Roberts who would go into a trans and

channel this multi-dimensional being
named Seth

and even if if Seth was just like a a
figment of her subconscious imagination
and and she herself would kind of toyed
with the idea still I mean Seth was
saying like

really profound mind-blowing stuff
and

so one thing Seth said in this book
was that like you uh a being in in from
Buddhist perspective I mean the main
element of of an individual being
individual being

is just the stream of karma the stream
of mental States

you know like volitional mental States

and that according to Seth I mean there can be like little streamlets that can split off from the mainstream and this little streamlet can just go off and become a like a dog or something in fact Seth was claiming that he had deliberately split off part of his his stream of of volitional Consciousness you know his karmic stream and and to become a dog so that's one possibility I mean you can have uh some somehow the stream of of karma the flow of karma the process of karmic mental states can just split and create two smaller beings somehow but then he said something else in the

same book that is intriguing to me and I think it's possible I mean I'm not insisting that it's true but he's saying that like for example if you're dreaming at night or if you're just like daydreaming during the day you imagine beings that don't really exist and it happens a lot you can you know you can be talking to somebody in a dream and that person doesn't really exist in empirical reality you know it's just like your subconscious mind just sort of made up this person that might resemble kind of two or three other people that you know of but it's still it's it's not any of them and you've created these beings in your

in your mind they've got like this
shadowy wispy very
faint kind of existence but after you
stop dreaming them it I mean you've
already kind of created this being has
its own new stream and it starts off in
this very you know semi
um you know sort of a semi-world it's
just very tenuously got like a little
toe hold of some kind of samsaric
existence and then it just sort of
builds up from there sort of like the
Jane's believe that uh like crystals and
and water or fire are like an elemental
form of life and then even that
gradually develops into something more

advanced

so

I mean again

people that are here today aren't

weren't necessarily people you know

many generations ago I mean it could be

that a lot of the people that are alive

today were some sort of ghost beings or

animals or something which could explain

why so many people nowadays in in the

west at least are essentially NPCs

that you know they don't have much

originality or independent thought they

just follow along almost mindlessly with

what everybody else is almost mindlessly

following along with

so I mean they may be coming up out of

ghost Realms or or animal Realms or or
whatever

but it is kind of an interesting
um idea and it's one that kind of belies
the whole Mahayana concept of you know
the bodhisattva vows you know I vow to
liberate all beings

but I mean this universe has been around
for an infinite infinitely long time and
all beings are not yet liberated which
indicates that all beings will never be
liberated

foreign but

going with Orthodox Buddhism some beings
become liberated

and so either you've got an infinite

number of beings that somehow even
though uh you know a few of them are are
fading out or going off the scale it's
just

Infinity is so paradoxical you can't
wrap your mind around it so that you
know you could just keep going forever
and you've always got to have an

Infinity of beings

or new beings are being generated
and I don't know what the answer is
so I'll just move on to the next
question

also from Austin

and Austin says

I have heard monks from the mahasi
lineage particularly Utah Damo biku say

that samata meditation can't lead you to seeing reality clearly therefore it is not conducive to Enlightenment and can only lead you to the Brahma realm

thoughts on this well if it doesn't lead you to Enlightenment then why would the Buddha emphasize it as much as he did he emphasized samata more than he emphasized we passana or or mindfulness in the texts just going with the sutas he talks more about cultivating samata than he does about cultivating um mindfulness and the vipassana that arises from mindfulness practice and that in fact in the uh practically the Bible for for the whole

wipasana movement including the mahasi
people which is the mahasadi batana suta
defines right concentration
as for Janus

so

um I think the mahasi people who really
I mean I've never heard of any mahasi
person becoming enlightened

um it's like they get up to maybe

Saka dagami you know second to lowest
level of sainthood and just kind of stay
there

at least that's uh that's a common
belief in uh in Burma anyway

the mahasi lineage it just doesn't lead
all the way to Enlightenment itself
so it's it's in a way it might be kind

of sour grapes it's like the mahasi
lineage it started back in the 50s with
mahasi Seattle himself
and

I mean it was like mindfulness is good
enough you don't need to cultivate the
genres according to the mahasi tradition
and they use some sub commentary an
obscure statement where two in sub
commentaries to try to lend some like
Authority and legitimacy to this idea
uh it's kind of it's the commentaries
that you have to have at least
or at least they imply you have to have
at least um
uh what's it called neighborhood

concentration

which is supposedly pre-jonna but it's

not mentioned in the sutos

um yeah this whole thing has been a

raging controversy since the 1950s with

the mahasi people saying you not only do

you don't need Jonna but you don't even

need

um like access concentration or

neighborhood concentration

and for some reason the poly term is

just eluding me

but um I mean the Buddha did emphasize

it and there are texts

one of my favorites being the the Lesser

discourse on voidness or emptiness in

the majum in ikaya which explains how

Jana can get you enlightened and it's like the Monk Is cultivating cultivating voidness or emptiness so the first thing he does is he moves out into a into a forest he gets away from the village he gets away from town where you've got all these you know all this artificial junk that kind of obscures reality you get out into the forest so that's already you've got more emptiness more voidness than you did before and then you start cultivating deeper and deeper meditative States you get into like really Advanced genre States until finally you get to the formless concentration of mind

animator samadhi

which is considered to be just the
highest mental state you can attain
you know it's it's above ordinary for
the genre it's it's like the highest
state that you can cultivate
mentally

and then the monk comes out of that and
then he realizes that even that even the
highest possible cultivatable state has
a beginning and an end and it's
conditioned and it's just not it it's
not Nirvana and so that causes this
click where you just kind of let go and
you realize I mean it's not it's not
going to work it can't work because
anything that you cultivate is going to
have a beginning and it's going to be

conditioned and it's going to have an
end and it's not going to be enlightened
so then

you just let go and then that's it you
just the click happens in your and
you're enlightened supposedly

um I think it is very possible that not
everybody has to get to that level

but some people do it's like some people

I mean in in Buddhism it's not like

you're going up this ladder or up this
mountain until you reach the top because
there is no top you just keep going up
and up and up forever I mean there's no
there's no limit

So eventually in Buddhism Enlightenment

comes where you just let go of the whole
thing you just bail out sideways and
some people they can bail out sideways
at a relatively crude level without
having to attained genre yet whereas
other people they've got to get up to
the level of the Monk and the the Lesser
discourse on voidness where you get to
the highest possible level that you can
attain

uh like with with your meditative mind
and and maybe I guess you could say
that's the top of the mountain but
that's still not it because
Enlightenment is is just totally beyond
the top of the mountain in that case
but at least you have to get to that

level in order to finally have the click
and have have Enlightenment somehow
happen

but uh yeah the mahasi lineage they're
really not in a position to say you
can't become enlightened by practicing
some on top because they're not
enlightened either you know they're just
it's in a way it's kind of Wishful

Thinking sort of

um sort of mahasi favoritism you know
they're just that's their tradition and
they're standing by it

but um

the Buddha did really emphasize the
importance of Jonah and just really

subtle meditative contemplative States
and uh you know it's certainly going to
help you I mean
a lot of especially mahasi people
they'll say well you get psychic powers
and from practicing genre and then it
gets distracting and you know it can
just lead you astray and all that but I
mean you have to be careful of that sort
of thing but but still
um the Buddha wouldn't have spent so
much time teaching it if it was
worthless
essentially
so I'll just move on to uh Austin's next
question which is kind of interesting
one can a psychopath become enlightened

and psychopath is kind of
it's kind of a vague term I mean any
kind of real weird person
uh like significantly weird might be
called a psychopath so I'll just go with
the term I'll just redefine the question
here as a sociopath
because I think the main definition of a
psychopath is essentially a sociopath
which is a person who has no conscience
no compassion you know they're just like
completely
like separate from everybody else or at
least
like subjectively you know they don't
give a [__] what anybody else feels and

they're gonna just you know hurt anybody
and they don't care
and you know they have no remorse no
guilt over that sort of thing no
conscience essentially
and I don't think a person like who's
completely cut off with no compassion
could become enlightened because
Enlightenment in a way is like you're
getting rid of all the walls between you
and everybody else and you're completely
knocking down Pink Floyd's wall whereas
the sociopath is just completely encased
in this wall
you know they have no compassion no
empathy with other beings they're just
they're just locked in and so they're

going to have to uh stop being a sociopath before they can become enlightened at least that's that's what I consider to be likely I really don't have a lot of experience with sociopaths trying to become enlightened I mean there's unguly Mala in the texts it was a kind of serial killer who became enlightened but um apparently the Buddha was able to teach him in a way by just blowing his mind essentially and ghoulimala was chasing after the Buddha trying to kill him and the Buddha was just walking at a

normal pace and no matter how fast
Angela ran he couldn't catch him and so
that just kind of blew his mind you know
it was like this miracle happened and
then he you know it's sort of like at
least a little bit of Pink Floyd's wall
kind of fell away when his mind was
blown like that and then the Buddha
could sort of penetrate and uh teach him
something that would actually help him
and Uncle him all up eventually became
enlightened he was ordained as a monk
stopped killing people of course
and uh became an armaan
but he had to stop being a psychopath or
a sociopath assuming that he was one in
order to uh really make spiritual

progress because again if you're going to become enlightened you no longer have a sense of self you no longer have barriers between you and the rest of the world you and everyone else and it seems to be the sociopath has much stronger barriers than the average person he's just isolated

so I'll move on to the next question this is the last question by Austin although not the last question by alongside

on this uh particular q a and Austin's last question is wouldn't celibacy lead to sexual repression and abnormal behavior among monks

well I mean celibacy itself can be
called a kind of abnormal behavior for
an adult human
um and it is it is true I mean at the
very least it's going to cause horniness
among monks like chronic frustration and
horniness that can then I mean if it's
bottled up can then
you know sort of fester in the
subconscious mind or down in the mind
and then come percolating up in the form
of like hysterical symptoms using
Freudian terms
um neurotic symptoms and I have some
experience with that
so yeah
celibacy can lead to sexual oppression

and abnormal behavior among monks
although again this is a case of
um you know doing something at the
beginning

I mean you might do it for certain
reasons and it's got a certain Dynamic
to it but then as you make progress in
dhamma your wisdom increases and then
eventually you see that you know the
horniness or the desire for sex or
whatever

um I mean you can just let it go I mean
it eventually through abstinence if
you're doing it correctly and maybe you
just don't have a very strong libido
anyhow

then you're able to repress it go
through like the neurotic you know the
hypochondria or or whatever symptoms it
is whatever it is and eventually make it
through to the other side where you've
um had the Insight where you can just
leave it behind and then you know it's
Off to the Races

so celibacy certainly does lead to
sexual repression abnormal behavior
among monks just being a monk is
abnormal just going with uh Human Nature
but um

I mean it's
it's seen as preferable by a lot of
celibate monks it's seen as preferable
to just you know wallowing in uh

sensuality

but um to for monks that have a like a a
strong libido it can it can just be an
ordeal

seriously

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from near MIT

it's an Indian name I'm not sure how to
pronounce it correctly n-i-r-m-i-t

and nirmit says I feel like genres are
completely misunderstood by most

teachers what is being taught today as
being a genre is not the same genre the
Buddha was talking about any thoughts

well yeah I think Jonah has been

misunderstood and uh it very early on

actually before the texts were

completely

finalized I think

so there's that and then

um I've already mentioned a number of

times that in Burma

excuse me

in Burma

probably most of what is called Jonna is

really hypnotic trance not all of it I'm

not saying all of it

but like even even at some place like

which cultivates John I mean that's one

of the purposes of the method is you're

supposed to cultivate Jonah there but I

mean I've had a lot of talks with with

people that have meditated there I've

spent some time there myself I've read
at least one book by Paul Seattle I've
spoken of Paul Seattle and
some of the people there are just
hypnotizing themselves they're going
into like a trance State and then
thinking that they've attained Jonah
when I don't think they really have
um fourth genre has been defined lately
or I'm probably since ancient times
as a state where you almost stop
breathing your heart rate slows down and
you're just oblivious to everything
around you you're essentially like a
hibernating squirrel this is supposed to
be the highest level of of meditation

um normally speaking setting aside a few of these states that also get added uh are mentioned sometimes in the texts but traditionally fourth genre is supposed to be you know you know the highest genre

it's the highest one on the list the number goes up to four

um and even the the formless genres are supposedly just variations on fourth of John

um I mean I if it's like temporary

Liberation which is called

that Jonah is temporary Liberation I

don't see how being enlightened would be essentially being oblivious to

everything around you and you're like a

hibernating squirrel

so yeah I think that the Ford John is originally just four stages of meditation just four different levels of of you know progression in meditation where at first genre you're meditating correctly but you're still thinking you're like labeling things that that sort of thing and then second genre you're not thinking anymore but you're still feeling mental and physical Pleasure and Pain then you get to third genre and you're still feeling physical Pleasure and Pain but you're not feeling mental Pleasure and Pain anymore like happiness unhappiness you

know anxiety or Joy or that kind of
thing and then fourth of jaw you're not
I mean you're Wide Awake you're just
empty you know you're more you should be
more awake than you are in your normal
you know working consciousness
but I mean you just risen above
you know pretty much all the ups and
downs of the of the mental States and
the sensations
so I do think that uh like scholar monks
who have never really attained it like
the higher meditative States they're
like philosophizing about it and coming
up with these schemes they're trying to
systematize it and nail it down as to
its this and not that and

I think a lot of them really didn't know what they were talking about like the medieval Sri Lankan commentators for example

so yeah Jonah is is very much misunderstood I think

um it there's different levels of misunderstanding where

um like even in ancient times what was originally in my opinion probably just four stages in the progression of meditation and not necessarily

superhuman mental States I mean nowadays according to Orthodox tradition even first genre when you're still thinking is a superhuman mental state you know

you've you've begun you're beyond
ordinary human level and for a monk to I
mean it's forbidden for long to even
talk about having attained it
thank you

and if he deliberately lies about having
attained he's excommunicated for life
that's one of the worst things a monk
can possibly do
but um

yeah I already mentioned that the four
genres are considered to be right
concentration the right concentration is
defined as the four genus in the
mahasadi patanosuta so it's kind of
strange that superhuman mental States
would be necessary to follow the

Eightfold Path correctly

but um yeah it's it's really kind of messy and then as I also said that a lot of people just kind of delude themselves in into thinking that any kind of weird experience they have is is like genre or or or work or even higher they think you know some Monk or even this delay person they're meditating and they have some kind of mind-blowing experience all kinds of you know mental fireworks or whatever and they just think they've become a sodapon they think they're an aria or a Buddhist Saint or they've at least had second genre or whatever and yeah there's a lot of that

and most of the people that I've met who
consider themselves to be aureas in my
opinion

are not

but um

I think I should just move on to the

next question this is from Jules

the ends in a z on S jewels and

j-e-w-e-l-z

or Zed for those of you in uh

in Old England

and Jules says are there any

comprehensive meditation instructions

that are comparable to the sunny batana

suta to be found in any non-budist

tradition or religion

um with regard to like I mean the sunny

patana suta is like a condensed
compilation of different meditation
techniques and I really don't know
enough about other contemplative
Traditions to know if they have
something similar in this condensed
compendium of the different meditation
techniques

but there are non-budhas texts that do
give meditation instructions like Saint
John of the cross

um one of my favorite non-buddhist
Saints

um yeah he had a lot to say about
meditation and contemplation which would
be probably at least second genre

because you're not thinking anymore and
you know he gives advice that isn't even
found in the text like how do you know
when to switch from meditation where
you're still thinking to contemplation
where you're not thinking anymore
he gives advice on you know when you
know when you're ready kind of a thing
that is is hard to find in in the
Buddhist texts

um Hinduism of course has meditation
techniques I think just about any
esoteric contemplative

School of any religion that has an
esoteric contemplative school like
Sufism or or probably even like in
Judaism you know you've got some kind of

um obscure texts that most people have never heard of that are giving you know meditation instructions like um what does it say Ignatius Loyola um you know the founder of the Jesuits I can't remember the name of the book I haven't read it but I've been told that it's just you know how to train a Jesuit priest or Monk

um

and then it's got all these these guided visualizations and so forth that you have to do but um yeah it was regard to something as condensed as the Saudi batana pseudo which is largely just a list of the

various meditation techniques with like
a synopsis of how to do each one
um yeah I haven't read enough
non-buddhist uh texts
like along those lines to really be able
to say although uh Saint John of the
Cross does that kind of thing definitely
although it's he's not he's not giving a
condensed list you know he's just giving
meditation instructions and
contemplation instructions
so we'll just move on to the next
question this is from shock ragosha
and chakra Gosha says how do you know
which syllable to stress in Pali the
rules are different in pre-classical
Vedic Sanskrit versus classical Sanskrit

in Vedic Sanskrit as in Greek you have to learn where the stress goes for each conjugated form of each word but in classical Sanskrit as in Latin you can always tell where it goes based on the shape of the word heavy syllables and whatnot how does it work in Pali for example definitely should be Siddhartha Gautama with he's got like the little accents showing where the verse or the the stress goes in classical Sanskrit but I really have no idea where to put stress in vedicore and poly well it's in Pali like in poly poetry for example it doesn't even go by stress which is something that's hard for me to

fully understand I don't fully
understand it but it goes by length or
shortness of vowels that's that's how
the the Cadence of of meter Works in
poly poetry in poly verse is long versus
short vowels
and so there's there's no real mention
of stress there's no stress on stress in
in poly
um pronunciation it's just length and
shortness of vowels
like a common name for a Buddhist monk
would be uh we Mala where where's women
it's like there is three short vowels
and so there's there's no stress at all
it's weem a lot I mean if you say it
correctly we we English people are

people who speak English you want to have a stress in there and so some people will like an American may just like mispronounce the name as we Mala is like I mean it sounds like I'm putting the stress on the first syllable which maybe I am accidentally but there should be no stress at all in the word because every vowel is a short vowel so in poly you got long vowels that have like the macron over the top um they have like the substitute for stress in English over a short vowel which has no macron over the top and then e unless it's before a double consonant is slightly longer than the

usual long vowel and 0 unless it's
before a double consonant is the longest
vowel so o gets the most stress but
really it's just

um is it takes the longest to say it
so

um my understanding of the pronunciation
of poly is that it's not really based on
stress that if any word has all vowels
the same length like mostly all short
vowels and no

syllable in the word would receive any
more stress than any other

so that's that's my answer I guess

hmm yeah I've heard that Greek was kind
of like that too Greek poetry it's it's
based more on length or shortness of

vowels rather than stress

but I'm not I mean I'm No Authority on
Greek poetry

so I'll just move on to the next
question

no chakra Gosha doesn't feel betrayed by
the shortness of my answer considering
the length of some of my other answers
but we gotta move on we got to get this
done

so the next question is from the Arya
suasti project

and Arya Swarovski project says
greetings Ponyo when I am consistently
meditating and minding the precepts it
seems that things are different around

me not that I'm just in a standard
attitude adjustment as in mining manners
driving the speed limit Etc Not to cause
a stir but that things occur differently
there sometimes seems to be an uncanny
synchronicity happening you could liken
it to the humming a song in your head
and then get in the car and it's playing
on the radio sort of thing well we've
all heard of that the synchronicity is
with very ordinary things but an
extraordinary order I really don't think
I'm crazy nor am I trying to attribute
fantasy to reality and I load those who
make connections where there are none to
sound important or spiritual Etc can you
tell me your thoughts on this warm

regards much respect

well yeah I have found in my own life

that if you're doing intensive practice

especially all kinds of weird

coincidences can happen this

synchronicity happens a lot and it still

happens a lot in my life even though as

I've mentioned I'm not doing formal

sitting meditation anymore

but um I mean some people especially my

sweetheart she can just be like

weirded out or stunned or you know

because I'm continually saying something

that she happens to be thinking in fact

a few times she's she's like right like

beginning to say it and I just out with

it and I mean sometimes it's stuff I mean it's not like we're just I mean sometimes it's like something we're seeing on a YouTube video or something but other times I mean we're just lying there silently and then I'll just up with saying something off the wall and then she's like you know in a state of almost mild alarm because that's exactly what she was thinking about at the moment and it's not that I have the psychic power of reading your mind it's it's synchronicity it's just uh I mean I don't I don't know I guess young um defined synchronicity is like a meaningful coincidence so yeah I mean if you practice dhamma

then just weird coincidences just keep happening

um I it might be that some of the like the Miracles performed by Saints it's just the same thing it's like they're at a higher level and

it's just you know they're not reading your mind necessarily they'll just blurt out something and it just happens to be you know what's in your mind it's just weird coincidences I really do think that a lot of so-called Miracles might be that way

whereas just uh you know the the person like the the Swami the guru or whatever they're not deliberately trying to do

this you know they're just doing what comes naturally and it's just that you know they're so in tune with the other person that there's kind of an us Vibe going

um at least in cases like this and then it's sort of the US thoughts are coming out which are kind of blowing the mind of the other members of the US group that are participating although that might not account for all synchronicity but in a way

if you're doing Dharma practice you know you know we you have more control over your surroundings in a way that you don't have full control over it's it's it's hard to explain but

um you know your karma is kind of in
sync with with with your mind and it's
your karma is also conditioning what's
going on around you

so the more advanced you get in endoma
practice

the more this kind of thing tends to
happen or if you're just with a person
who's

um very liminal

and possibly very Advanced this sort of
thing can happen too

so I'll just um

move on to the next question this is

from rafi46

and Rafi 46 says

the Buddha promised the besotted Nanda
500 Celestial nymphs if you would stay a
monk is a Buddhist who tries to avoid
performing on wholesome comma only
because he wants pleasure with Celestial
nymphs any different from a Muslim who
lives the pious life on this Earth only
so he can have do the opposite in
Paradise like drinking and having sex
with multiple virgins well I could do a
whole video on this one
um for those of you unfamiliar with the
terrible Buddhist uh lore Nanda was the
Buddha's half-brother
and the Buddha did this thing is I mean
he's fully enlightened you know
allegedly

I mean that's that's the working
hypothesis or the firm belief of devout
Buddhists

and uh on his wedding day the Buddha
lured him away from getting married
by showing him what celestial nymphs
look like

and then he persuaded Ananda to be
ordained as a monk instead so he jilted
his his fiancée practically at the altar
by showing him that you know the the day
of the Deva women you know make human
women look like monkeys by comparison
essentially

and um I mean it's kind of a dirty trick
I'm sure the the fiancée didn't like it

much

um

but the thing is Nanda he was sort of I mean he liked girls apparently and uh so the Buddha used that is is what a Mahayana Buddhist would call skillful means to get him interested in becoming a monk but then as Nanda practice diligently at first so he can get the the 500 Celestial nymphs um you know regardless of his motives at the beginning he was he was practicing correctly I mean he was under the the you know the the tutodship the tutelage that's it he was under the tutelage of an enlightened being and so he's practicing correctly and so his his

wisdom is progressing and before long
his desire for the 500 uh Celestial
nymphs had uh evaporated and he became
fully enlightened
and uh it wasn't that the desire for the
celestial names evaporated at the moment
of Enlightenment I mean he had to leave
that behind before he could ever get
enlightened so it's sort of like I was
talking about earlier where you can
start off with not very good motives but
at least if the motives are getting you
moving in the right direction then as
your Insight and your wisdom improves
you'll be leaving those behind and
getting better motives

essentially

so at first it might be like the the
pious Muslim who just wants the the
Dark-eyed hurries but um if you're
practicing correctly practicing
meditation your wisdom is increasing
then your the wisdom of your motives
will will increase the likewise
so I'll just move on to Rafi 46 next
question

Buddhists often write online that they
personally oppose abortion because it
violates the precept against killing but
at the same time they don't want that
the state Outlaws abortions because it
is the woman's choice and outlawing it
would create a black market and make

things worse

but now the same Buddhists favor a state
which Outlaws late-term abortions

occurring from 21 weeks onward without
the mother's life being at risk wouldn't

this be hypocrisy since the Buddha

didn't make a difference between an

abortion some weeks after the

fertilization and an abortion some weeks

before giving birth

well this is kind of surprisingly subtle
question

um

I can just sort of give you my own take

on like my own attitude and that from a

Buddha's point of view life does begin

at conception it's Buddhism and biology
agree with this that an organism an
individual organism's Life Begins as
soon as you know the the sperm and they
come together they create this new cell
that has its own unique
um you know DNA's DNA sequences
um and so that's it it's it's alive this
this little fertilized cell this zygote
it's already alive it's metabolizing you
know it's respiring and then it grows
until it becomes you know what it a baby
but life began at conception and
according to Buddhism you have to have
the karmic stream
at at conception so it's like the the
being who has taken rebirth

according to taravada takes rebirth at the moment of conception so you've got like a being there you've got like a human being there in sort of a uh Elementary State you know very primitive kind of but um still it is a human being so

um you know I can I can take I can accept that but I also can accept that my religious beliefs or you know some ethical principles just just because you think something is immoral doesn't necessarily mean that it should be illegal

so I can I'm kind of okay with some immoral things being legal I don't want

to be a complete Puritan and Outlaw and
from a Buddhist point of view of even
like singing and dancing or immoral not
as not as immoral as killing a baby but
still I mean

there have been cultures that have
outlawed singing and dancing and they
were very neurotic repressed kind of
people

um so I mean if you separate your
religious beliefs with your you know
political principles you know religious
principles you know or over here
political principles over here I mean
they should be interacting to some
degree they should be sort of on
speaking terms but still

um

yeah it is kind of complicated

but um whether whether it would be

hypocrisy or not I mean that's that's

the gist of this question wouldn't this

be hypocrisy

um it would depend on the individual and

and exactly what the thought process is

um you know they're thinking that

aborting a fetus from 21 weeks onward is

just so immoral that you're gonna have

to step in I mean you have to draw the

line somewhere you know you can allow

people to gamble and and drink alcohol

and sing and dance and tell lies

sometimes but I mean you have to draw

the line somewhere where you're going to draw the line between you know this is just immoral but I mean it's it shouldn't be illegal and this is so immoral that it should be illegal so I think it might be a case of that in a lot of cases so I'll just move on to the next question this is from Air rain and Aaron says if karma from killing bugs and things is volitional in Buddhism how about the scenario you're a Buddhist and your puppy has worms the worms are slowly feeding off the life force of your puppy and robbing it of nutrition making it sickly and eventually leading to death

you cannot just Purge the worms from
your puppy as part of the worms life
cycle is being purged into the soil then
returning back up into the host how do
you rid your puppy of worms as a
Buddhist or do you simply do nothing and
allow the puppy to die a slow death
because you cannot intentionally kill
the worms in Southeast Asia Village dogs
lead short cruel lives by Western
standards so many basic things like this
are hard for modern westerners to grasp
yeah there's a lot to cover in this
actually
um yeah as a monk living in tropical
Asia I mean it's not just puppies it's

just monks that get worms I've I've had
intestinal worms

um numerous times

and uh

yeah I remember one Korean monk he was
staying at this monster it was a it was
a rough monster and he used to be like a
professional dancer he did not belong
there at all he was just freaking out
when he was seeing little white worms in
his poop

he was afraid of lizards and all kinds
of things too he left as soon as the
Reigns retreat was over he was out of
there

but Tom I digress

um but some I mean I just took the

worming medicine I mean it's like the
purpose

um

the purpose is not to kill the worms the
purpose is just to get myself worm free

and going with that idea it's it's

allowable even for a monk to kill to

kill small animals like for example

there was one time especially it was

right after a rainy spell and the whole

ground was just covered with these tiny

little gnats this countless myriads I

mean you could not walk across the

ground without squishing them

but

still I mean I wasn't just going to be

paralyzed it's like I have to get from
point A to point B I have to I have to
walk over over

there I gotta get my hand in the camera
here over there

so I just my purpose is not to squish
bugs I just gotta you know I just gotta
go there

so

I I went there and squished these bugs
and

it wasn't against the rules because that
was not my intention

so with uh worming your puppies and or
worming yourself for that matter

um

well I mean you just that is that is

your intention is just to keep yourself healthy you know it's you don't have any ill will you don't hate the damn little worms you know it's like here take this worms and taken poisoning to kill you little bastards you know it's not like that it's just I gotta be healthy and so you can you can do that if you have you know certain mental States I mean you're not doing it in order to kill living beings you're just doing in order to be healthier for your puppy to be healthy so that would be allowable uh some monks in Burma they will they'll eat like papaya seeds or something like that that supposedly just the worms don't like it

and so they abandon ship but still I
mean

you know once they leave the host body
they're pretty much in trouble unless
maybe they just get pooped into like a
like a assess pit and then they're just
living in this paradise of of poop for
the rest of their lives or something I
don't know

but

at another level I mean the very The
Nest the

necessity of doing this kind of stuff is
one reason why monks are supposed to
just renounce the world and have no
family ties and not keep pets you know
that kind of a thing because if you're

going to just be like totally hardcore
not not going to kill any living beings
if you can possibly help it just you
know radical aimsaw then yeah you pretty
much have to be like a renunciate and
renounce the world if you've got kids
you know with lice or or you know they
come home from school with head lice or
they've got pinworms or something I mean
it's your duty to uh to your children
much more than it's your duty to the to
the parasites

so

um you just have to kind of take the hit
sometimes

you just have to have uh

ranked priorities so to speak

so but it's true that Southeast Asian

Village dogs have a four-year-old dog in

Southeast Asia in a village is an old

dog

yeah it's it's not it's it's almost like

a hell realm getting back to the

question way up above on the scroll

that uh you know there are hell Realms

in this world in a a scroungy mangy

Southeast Asian Village dog is in kind

of a hell Realm

ah I'll uh restrain the urge to give the

the mangy dog simile given in the texts

but uh well I don't know I'm already

what the hell this brevity is just not

an option in this video but there is a

suit I can't remember which one where
the Buddha compares the average World
link the average person immersed in
samsara with a Manji dog and the dog is
just it can't be comfortable it's just
you know just eating alive with
itchiness and so it lies down on this
side and that doesn't help so it
scratches itself that doesn't help it
lies down on the other side that doesn't
help it gets up and moves over there
still itches and it's just like in the
state of chronic
unease because it just can't get
comfortable and I mean that's kind of
the way the average human is to some

degree in this world is just just

Restless you know dissatisfied urge to

just you know more and more and more

but uh getting back to aryan's question

now so long as your intention is not to

kill

then uh you can take the dewormer and uh

just don't think about it in a way it's

it's sometimes being unmindful can can

save you from offenses I've noticed that

as a monk some some rules you can only

break them if you do it consciously and

deliberately so if you just do it

mindlessly and you're not breaking the

rule

so I'll just move on to the next

question here this is from aurelian one

of my favorite Emperors by the way
and aurelian says what are your thoughts
on Outreach or incorporation of
neo-pagans into the wider navacavara
based Buddhist Community it occurs to me
that there is a lot of masculine energy
in many Pagan circles but without
fleshed out theology many can resort to
larperly cooking up their own personal
beliefs or moving on to other religious
systems perhaps emphasizing the
indo-europeans roots and incorporating
Pagan elements in an appropriate form
Thor as dhamma protector can help
bring more people into a bigger tent and
give an overall theological framework

for disparate spiritual dissidents

is there Merit in this or do you find a

stripped down iconoclastic zen-like

approach more appropriate in modern

America

well even Zen has its Pantheon of gods

and so forth

um some Zen Buddhists put more emphasis

on that than others the problem with uh

the modern West or the postmodern west

of course is that we really don't have

much paganism that still existing other

than as like replicas or larperly as uh

aurelian here puts it

um I mean if we had an established Pagan

tradition then I don't think it would be

very difficult to uh

um combine that with Buddhism to some degree like when the Greeks the ancient Greeks and when Alexander the Great conquered uh Northwest India and then Northwest India for hundreds of years that general area was under Greek control

then a lot of the Greeks the Pagan you know polytheist Greeks were converted to Buddhism but

um like on their coins they'd have like the Buddha on one side of the coin and Athena the goddess of wisdom on the other side of the coin

so I mean it it has happened and it does happen

um you know the Burmese had their own uh
polytheistic cult the NAT cult that got
incorporated into Buddhism by largely by
adopting Saka the uh the the king of
talatimsa Heaven you know the king of
Gods and Teletubbies of Heaven he became
the leader of these these Gods the the
Burmese before they converted to
Buddhism we're worshipping
so yeah it can't happen but the thing is
in the west there's really not much of a
pagan tradition left we've kind of
touched on this a little earlier on in
this video
um it might be better to try and combine
it with uh some kind of philosophical
system

neostoicism or something that might that
might work also but if any kind of pagan
system catches traction there's I mean
Buddhism freely admits the existence of
gods it doesn't deny the existence of
small G Gods Devas and brahmas

so I mean you can you can incorporate it
I mean if Buddhism admits that there are
these small G Gods you know that aren't
the Creator God with the capital G but
still they do exist and I mean any kind
of polytheistic Pantheon can get his
foot in the door in Buddhism and there
can be sort of a merging where you adopt
Buddhist principles but you know some of
the Devas that you're you're discussing

have you know Pagan names non-woodist
names I mean I don't see any problem
with that

I mean that it wouldn't necessarily even
be uh uh deleterious to to the Buddhism
involved

but the thing is in the west you really
don't have much of a uh Pagan system and
what there is is uh you know it's it's
not deep rooted and indigenous
to the extent that I mean people are
just

I assume there are polytheistic pagans
alive today in the west that really
sincerely worship Thor or or Hera or
Athena or whatever and Isis ancient
Egyptian gods maybe but

um

it there's there's something that just
kind of rings false to me with regard to
a lot of what's going on where it's just
kind of a replica people are just
wanting to create this thing that they
themselves are kind of pretending at
um but I mean if there is any kind of
authentic genuine
system that is polytheistic
um and it doesn't have the moral
principles that are at variance with
with Buddhism then yeah they can fit
together
but I think in the west it might be
better to be more zen-like or try and

incorporate some kind of like Western
philosophical approach

but the way it's it's it's going now
with uh sort of the The Nutty lefties
just turning it into uh

kind of atheistic you know or not not
even atheists you just not much
spirituality and it's mostly just uh
leftist talking points kind of stuff
it's um

yeah I mean we need something better
than that

so I'll just move on to irelian's next
question

and aurelian's next question this is an
easy one this is kind of a refreshingly
easy question do your current

acquaintances ever ask you to go hunting
or fishing how would you respond to such
requests

not once nobody well I was kind of like
a

like a cosmic Cowboy you know pacifist
hippie before I was a monk so even

before I was a monk my buddies some of
whom really liked hunting and fishing
you know even they knew that they would
not to ask me I still have a few friends
who hunt

or fish but

you know they'll tell me what they got

you know we got a four-point buck the
other you know during deer season or

something it's like oh

okay

but yeah they don't they don't ask me so

um yeah I'd probably politely decline if

they invited me so I'll just move on to

the next question also for morelian

do you often mention Kwai Chang Kane and

it seems as if the Kung Fu series

supplied you with early inspiration and

perhaps a role model in your younger

days do you like any other martial arts

programs perhaps old the Shaw Brothers

films like 36th Chamber Of The Shaolin

well

it is true that when I was a kid I liked

the series Kung Fu you know that was one

of my first uh exposures to Buddhist

monasticism especially in the flashbacks
when he's back at the Shaolin Temple
but uh I mostly watched it for the the
Buddhism part and not so much for the
the martial arts

um

yeah I mean when I was in Burma
especially like riding buses from uh you
know upper Burma down to Rangoon you
know sometimes you can get some Chinese
wirefu movie I've watched some you know
Chinese martial arts movies

my hero is the one that done with Jet Li
I think it was uh
relatively well known in the west

um

so I mean I'm

you know I'm watching Jackie Chan or

something but

um you know it's I didn't get any kind

of spiritual instruction from it or

anything like that

the whole Kwai Chang Kane thing is it

really struck me more deeply than like a

Chinese wirefu movie and I've never

really seen any serious attempt at uh

like Buddhist philosophical movie that

just happens to be based on uh like

Shaolin Monks or anything like that I

I'm sure they're out there I just

haven't seen them

so we'll just move on to uh aurelian's

next and last question

which is if hypothetically a global
order came down that abrahamism would be
the one world religion on pain of death
or gulag

what Abraham is sect would you
grudgingly join or off to the gulag to
meditate

well that's that's kind of kind of a
difficult question to answer

because I mean it would depend on the
circumstances and it would depend on you
know what you know how religious you'd
have to be

um in order to be uh one of these
religions a member of one of these
religions

um

it's possible I just go to the gulag but

if if uh

if I had to choose an abrahamist

religion

um I I really can sort of resonate to

some degree with Catholicism some

aspects of it just because uh it does

have some some Western classical

paganism mixed in and uh some of some

Catholic saints in the past like Saint

John of the cross that I'm continually

bringing up I mean they I think it's

possible he may have been fully

enlightened

um I just can't believe the story

you know like

Jesus dying for our sins and and the
stuff about

um Mary the virgin mother of God and you
know to let alone the like genesis was
you know man made out of dirt and a
woman made out of a bone being tricked
by a snake and eating the wrong kind of
fruit thereby causing all the suffering
in the world and Jesus coming here to to
get us off the hook for for that

um yeah I I mean just with regard to

um what the

what what it requires you to believe I'd
probably it'd be easier for me to be a
Muslim because in Islam it's all pretty
much all there is is God is one God and

Muhammad is his prophet

I mean that that might be sufficient and

then I could be a Sufi or something

so yeah I need to be the gulag or maybe

I'd become a Sufi

if being a Sufi was allowable but you

know Allah is one God and Muhammad is

his Prophet I mean if all you got to do

is essentially believe that and do the

bows to Mecca and so forth and um that

might not be too obtrusive

in fact uh

I mean I'm I really hope that the world

doesn't become mandatory Muslim but um

I think

if there was

I mean if the West did become Islamic

it'd probably be better than what's
going on now at least it has the
potential to become better than cultural
marks it's just spiritually bankrupt
moral degeneracy with some feminine
sentiment thrown in to masquerade as a
moral High Ground

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from me and me
who is a new uh donor on uh subscribe
Stars I guess I should just follow my
subscriber or sponsor which is
appreciated and me and me says
in martial arts there is an energy
transfer between opponents when they
fight or practice there is also

something called Direct Energy

Transmission in the Chinese Healing Arts

these instances mean energy or knowledge

is transferred to the receiver this is

pretty well known among people I think

so I will also assume you know this we

also all know that there are people out

there that probably use such

understanding to manipulate things maybe

in different religions but here I am

wondering about this scenario do you

think an energy transfer can happen

between a master meditator martial

artist

and another person strictly through

energy in some kind of meditation

um

the martial artist part I think is
unnecessary

especially if it's in some kind of
meditation

um or maybe maybe me and me is asking
whether I'm a martial artist meditator
could actually like

fight somebody through meditation

um you know just through mental energies
you know just directing you know
intimidating energies to make them back
off or something

yeah I don't fully answer this

understand this question although

um

gosh I mean that's read the whole

question I'll just keep going here if
two people are in the same energetic
field like Partners they can creep into
each other's energetic field or body
both positively and negatively so a
person's in this similar type of field
together have their personal connection
do you think it is possible for one to
force their energy into the others field
or even body if one is weak enough
through meditation

have you ever heard of any monks or
Buddhists doing this or something like
this or manipulating energy to others
due to their understandings in
meditations

um yeah the actual meditation part is is

in a way kind of

unnecessary because I mean two people

I mean

mental states are contagious and a

person with a strong mind is gonna kind

of in a way overwhelm the mental states

of a person with a weak mind if they're

interacting especially if the person

with a strong mind is deliberately

trying to impose his will

and meditation can like refine that make

it stronger maybe or also make it more

subtle I mean you'd be less violent if

you're a meditator supposedly

um

so yeah this mental states are

contagious

and uh the stronger person may have the advantage in just uh

um having more of a vote with regard to what the US will be doing or what kind of state the US will be in because when two people interact there's always like this third being that isn't us

and if two people love each other deeply they're having a relationship that can be really strong just really really a strong presence there although in most cases it's it's kind of faint and subliminal but still it's there

and um

man this is such a long question here do you think it possible for one to

force their energy into another's field
or even body if one is weak enough

uh yeah

yeah I think that happens I mean I mean

just about everybody has done things

they didn't want to do just because of

somebody else wanting them to do it like

um like a good salesman like an

aggressive salesperson can get people to

buy stuff that when they're walking out

with it they might be regretting having

bought the things you know they just

kind of knuckle under the pressure or

something I mean I've done that before

I've never been I've never been much of

a consumer but uh people at one

particular time I won't go into details
but they sold me something that it's
like I just kind of like kind of
embarrassed not to pay for it so I just
got paid the money and got out of there
that was a long time ago
but that kind of thing can happen I
think uh some politicians like the the
really charismatic or Raiders can really
impose their will on the entire entire
crowds or even populations
but that I mean somebody like Adolf
Hitler wasn't a meditator not that I'm
aware of not in this life anyway
so it may be that some meditators are
like you know they're meditating for the
purpose of that it's not like right

concentration you know it's not
wholesome I suppose but uh yeah I'm sure
that like maybe in some kind of Tibetan
Buddhism that kind of thing happens like
milarepa started off as a kind of
sorcerer

so I mean you could use meditation as a
way of strengthening your sorcery skills
or some such

but um

that kind of leads to this next question
by by me and me

so I'll just go on to the next question
I'm sorry it was kind of a difficult
question for me to answer

though I think this next one is is sort

of along the same lines

so me and me also asks do you think

Buddhist sects practice magic without

realizing it if this is actually true

where would they be and how would you

know if you entered one such place would

you feel it is not very pure or

something is wrong well it depends on

what kind of magic they're practicing I

mean if they're doing white magic then

uh

yeah and there there are Sorcerers in

Burma some of them are monks that uh do

white magic and also there are some who

are Accused at least of doing black

magic there was a relatively famous

Seattle in Burma who was uh accused of

being a necromancer like uh controlling
the spirits of the dead and that kind of
a thing

but um

I mean you wouldn't know it by just
meeting him or unless you were like
really super sensitive Maybe I didn't
notice anything like

creepy or spooky about him I met him
personally a few times

let's see

so I mean there are like

like in in Southeast Asia there are
monasteries where they are practicing

Alchemy and also some kinds of uh

white magic probably some some monks out

there doing black magic too

so

um I think you'd note if you enter to
such a place not just from the vibe so
much as uh just seeing the paraphernalia
on altars or you know just take a good
look around you're seeing any weird
paraphernalia you know like the weird
weird bells or or whatever that uh
that Sorcerers might use
um that would probably be a better
indication

and would you feel it is not very pure
or something it would depend on the
mental states of the monks there I mean
if they're they're like really in some
kind of evil mental state you could pick

up on that if you've got any sensitivity
or empathy but uh I mean if they're
doing white magic or they're just doing
spells for

um you know getting a Deva to to like
heal some sick baby or something

um

yeah but it may be that that me and me
is is referring to this kind of magic as
you know imposing one's mental States
upon somebody else and

I I haven't really heard of that I'm
sure it happens I mean just anything you
can think of is going to be somebody
doing it

but um

yeah I'm

as a general rule theravada Buddhist monks are pretty mild you know it's mild to the point of just being excruciatingly boring in many cases I mean most theravada Buddhist monks if you watch YouTube videos and so forth they tend to be pretty boring they're just dry and it's it's it makes sense really if you think about it because they're trying to like phase out you know they're just trying to fade out of of existence and so it's like the more boring you get the closer you are to to Nirvana or something so yeah it's it's it happens but um um and there are there are like

alchemical schools and monasteries in
Burma and uh by schools I mean like a
sect not like a an institution where you
go there and get trained or something
and I'm sure that there are like monks
practicing necromancy and that sort of
thing but to actually imposing their
will and like manipulating people and so
forth

um

I don't know I mean there there are like
famous Rich monks who will use their
Charisma and just the awe that they
Inspire as a way of getting donations
out of people but I don't think that's
what me and me is referring to here so

I'll just move on to me and me's next question

which is what do you know about the birthplace of the Buddha well it's well established in uh the Terra water

Buddhist texts that the Buddha was born in the city or near the city of

kapilawatu which would be most Scholars would agree that it's now in what is it would now be Southern Nepal which was you know within the sphere of Indian culture

at the time

so I guess it's called Lumbini in modern times there's a Ashokan pillar there commemorating the birth of the Buddha there it may be that uh tradition is

mistaken and he was really born somewhere else like I consider it to be a mistake in Christian tradition that the Buddha or that the Jesus was born in Bethlehem I think he's probably more likely born up around Galilee but the Old Testament prophecies that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem um required the uh the composers of the gospels to monkey with the details a bit and somehow having born in Bethlehem even though everyone knew he came from Galilee so it could be that something like that happened with the Buddha also but tradition is well established that he was born in the city-state of

kapilawatu which was a kind of
um it was ruled by a like a an oligarchy
or like the the shatriya men of the the
upper classes formed like a a council
that ruled to pilawatu although
um

tradition has gotten the Buddha of the
son of a king the king of kapilawatu
although I think the archaeologists and
the indologists would say that really
tequila watu was in the kingdom it was
kind of a uh like an oligarchic
aristocracy it was just the ruling class
together sort of like the the patricians
of early Rome
um but then then uh in order to try to
combine the two they'll say well he was

the the leader of the the aristocracy
which made him like a king or you know
practically a king or something
so I think I answered that one
kapilowattu

which I believe was in uh Southern Nepal
and he just got wiped out I mean it was
it was it got genocided just not very
long after the Buddha died and there's
there's kind of a long story about
uh some King getting deceived and being
sent a servant girl instead of a
princess from there and getting mad and
sending his army and just killing
everybody
so forth but um let's just move on to

the next question

this is also from me and me

and me and me says

if good-natured Buddhists get ripped

apart from the tyranny of governments or

such types such as what has happened in

Tibet or other places how would you

equate that to their karma if karma is a

mental state

for example maybe they are a bit naive

let's see how would you equate that to

their karma question mark If karma is a

mental state

period

huh for example maybe they are a bit

naive I would think they would know if

something is coming and try to run and

hide or protect themselves or do they really just take it because of their Buddhism I was told a story and confirmed by a monk that they would just take it if they got attacked or even killed not to say they would really do that in real life maybe Instinct would take over yeah I mean there's there's nothing immoral about running away from murderers

I mean obviously if you can't overpower them and or defend yourself against them just run like when the the Turkish Muslims invaded India I mean it was just a massive genocide one of the greatest genocides in history

I've seen figures up around 30 million Indian Buddhists were killed and I mean some of them were just killed because they refused to to to convert to Islam some of them ran away some and some of them after they ran away just like starved or died of exposure or whatever or some of them converted and uh now there's not very much Buddhism in India anymore um so yeah I mean the really serious ones I mean they'd rather die than than like fight back and that's that's one reason why Buddhism got wiped out in India but Hinduism didn't because Hinduism still had some like military

ideals like uh you know like the
bhagavad-gita takes place on a
Battlefield

or or like the ramayana like the two
great epics of of uh Indian poetry the
ramayana and the Mahabharata both of
them are have a lot of like battles and
fighting and stuff going on Krishna who
was an avatar of Vishnu I mean he was he
was a fighter

so

um they they did have that in their
tradition that kind of you know
encouraged them to to fight back against
the the Muslims whereas the Buddhists
said they're just uncompromising

pacifists some of them were willing to
just take the hit some of them just ran
away other others converted

just because uh you know

human nature can be weak especially in
in some people and they'd prefer to stay
alive than not die with dignity or maybe
even undignified if they're being burned
alive or something

so yeah it depends on the individual and
it would be an individual choice

so the next question which is the last
question from me and me

and that is

fun for five how do you like the rapid
changing West in the U.S if you could
collect everyone I mean everyone

together and think about their karma

what is going on in that mind or what do

you think will happen

well that's that's kind of a tough one I

mean

collect everyone together and think

about their karmas like each person has

their own Karma there's obviously

similarities in overlap because you know

some of the same general things are

happening to pretty much everybody

so there are certain themes and you know

similarities but still I mean

everybody's uh got their own Karma

um what do I think will happen

or what is going on in in the the karma

of the people and what do I think will
happen well I'm not sure what's going to
happen what's going on in the mind I
think partly

what is happening why things are so
weird one of the reasons why things are
so weird in the in the west now
is that partly technology is changing
very fast

and also you've got progressivism
so-called

as though decline in follower progress
that is like trying to uproot all the
traditions and replace it with this new
you know hyper liberalism or cultural
Marxism or

progressivism whatever you want to call

it and was it's just people are losing
their Roots it's like they're losing the
law and order the structure
um sort of the cultural culturally
established social structure that kind
of kept everything more or less
predictable that and and of course
technology like like I mentioned so
things are changing and it's becoming
unstable and very liminal and just
things are just happening in very weird
ways and things are changing faster and
faster and
um it's it's I mean it's practically a
singularity now it's you can't really
predict what's going to happen you just

have to just kind of watch observe
carefully because uh I mean whether the
globalists you know the globalist
establishment is going to just lock down
control and and just set up the Brave
New World Order or whether there's going
to be enough resistance to that that
something else you know moving back in
the other direction a little more
traditionalist little more you know
established sensible tried and true you
know

like structure

is is reestablished that kind of settles
things down again but right now it's the
the roots are being torn up and you know
the the stakes are getting pulled up and

everything's in disarray and
everything's changing so fast and
and so it's just it's becoming liminal
and all just anything can happen now
it's it's

you know it's much more difficult than
predicting the weather

is what's going to happen it could just
take one little thing is one charismatic
leader to arise on one side or the other
to just you know take the whole thing in
that direction you really can't say but
um I do tend to have a certain amount of
faith in my karma

that uh I doubt that that any

I mean it's it's not going to be much

worse than a cyberpunk dystopia

um yeah I I really have enough faith in
my own destiny I think that it's not
going to be just a total horrible mess
of course some people will say it's
already a total horrible mess but it can
get be a lot worse than it is now
so I'll just move on to the uh the next
question this is from bpat427
and be Pat 427 says how would you
compare the temperament of Washington
residents to that of South Carolinians
well

golly that's kind of an interesting
question

and by Washington he's not talking about
Washington DC he's talking about

Washington state where I grew up and
where I first tried to live as a monk
after coming back from Burma in 2011.

with uh kind of ambivalent results

um

gee

well South Carolinians tend to be more
more conservative

they're more Christian you know more
likely to to go to church

um the people in Washington were more
Democrat people in South Carolina are
more Republican I think that would be
like one of the most obvious things
things are slower paced in South
Carolina I mean you can be stuck in a

checkout line behind somebody who's just having this long conversation with the the Checker you know he's talking about his dog back at home or something

um

people I mean there's much better traffic

um discipline in Washington state if I remember correctly than in South

Carolina like South where I'm living now maybe half of the people actually use their turn signals which I was told is due to a shortage of blinker fluid but I'm kind of skeptical of that

but uh I mean people are people and

Americans are Americans and there's way more similarities and differences in in

most respects

um

yeah I think I'm I'm more comfortable in
South Carolina now just because

um the left has just left me behind I
was kind of a long-haired hippie type
when I was young in Washington State

um

but uh

now the left has just gone insane as far
as I can tell

so there's more of that Insanity in
Washington than in South Carolina but
it's it's more of a city thing I mean
it's

I mean you go to like a college town

like a big city with with uh you know
sort of a left-leaning university which
most universities are and uh you know
it's it's gonna like the countryside in
Washington more closely resembles the
countryside in South Carolina and then
it does

Seattle

so

um yeah it depends on where you are in
each state but overall South Carolina is
just more easy going and slow paced and
and more accepting of people you know
more polite people are just like
really friendly blessing each other and
stuff you know temp customers at work
you know I load something onto their

truck with a forklift you know you have
a blessed day

you know there's just and it's

the pleasantries aren't just superficial

and the smiles aren't just superficial

like you'd get in like Seattle for

example

but I mean again it's just slight

differences it's not anything really

radical

and so finally at long last the last

question of the whole q a this is also

from bpat427 and this is kind of an

anti-climax because I've already uh

answered this question

above

bpap427 says do you currently have a formal sitting practice and I do not um I'm not sure how long I can sit in the full Lotus anymore I used to always sit in the full Lotus and I haven't sat in the full Lotus for more than just a few minutes

in in a very long time

so like I said I got as far as I could with formal sitting practice even as a monk practicing hours a day I just got to this point where I just was not making progress anymore and it lasted for years

and so finally I just said I need to try something else I mean if if you're doing something for years and it's not working

anymore at least you're not getting any better at it you know you're not making progress with it then uh it's time to try something else

so I'm uh trying something else I'm I'm uh doing the aesthetic practices of a Layman and I'm involved in a relationship which means that I have helped to create a third being called us and um

I hope I'm still making progress I mean obviously it's uh very different I'm dealing with very different situations than I used to when I was living alone in a cave in a forest so in a way I'm kind of like quite

champagne

speaking of the devil who was you know he
he leaves behind the monastery and he's
uh in the wild west you know getting
shot at by Cowboys and so forth
although I'm not getting shot at by
Cowboys

and that's the last question so I think
we're done other than just the uh the
little bit of advice here that if you
have any questions about anything you
think I might know something about
particularly Buddhism or monasticism or
the poly language or meditation or me
personally or
life in Southeast Asia anything like
that feel free to leave a question in

the comments below if you're a
subscriber on subscribe star you can
leave your comments there if you have
access to the Discord server you can
leave your questions there
and look at the links below which has
all the relevant information
including the links to my books on
Amazon
and be happy

hello and welcome to episode 40 of
question and answer I am your host panio
Basa

and I never imagined when I first
started doing these that I was going to
get up to 40. it's although it's taken a
few years and we've got uh lots of
questions

so I suppose I should just wade into it
without telling the customary dumb joke
ah Yoo-hoo I've never had one before

it's kind of like fake chocolate milk

so first question is from the Arya
sawasti project

and the Arya sewasti project says

greetings Ponyo I have been thinking

about my next death

not in a morbid way but a morbid way or

anything but I would hope that with a

little practice I could go out

peacefully barring some sort of karmic

issue and being taken out in a car wreck

or convenience store hold up or

something is there anything that we can

do to prepare ourselves daily for this

moment I've heard that some Adept yogis

can pick the time and day that there is

a slight shift or shiver in the body

when they pass on on that note I've

heard that there can be anywhere from

instant to 49 days from Incarnation to

Incarnation can you explain

warm regards much respect sadhu sadhu

sadhu

and I should add that this question was actually on the list last time and for some bizarre reason I just skipped over it and didn't see it

so let's just uh assume that he still wants to know the answer to this question

after all this time

so

um it's kind of a multiple question here

um is there anything that we can do to prepare ourselves daily for this moment

um yeah there's

um one of the meditations in theravada

Buddhism is modern non-new city or the

recollection of death it's considered to be one of the great protectors because as the Arya sawasdi project suggests here it does help to prepare you for the moment of death which

um Can arguably be considered the most important moment of your life because the moment of death kind of sets the bearings for your next Incarnation your next rebirth

um so if you if you die with a good mental States you're more likely to be at least pointing in a good direction um when with regard to your next rebirth and uh

with regard to Modern our new city I mean

um of the 40 Recollections you can say
that at least 11 of them are reflections
on death in in Orthodox Buddhist
Meditation instructions they're the the
standard list of 40 and I believe I've
done a video on that
um 11 of them are with regard to
contemplating death one is modern on new
city as I said and the other ten are
just reflecting on Corpses
and when you're reflecting on a corpse
or a skeleton
um you're supposed to think to yourself
you know as is that so will I be as I am
so is that
and uh just just reminding yourself that

you're going to die every day
you know seeing like decrepit old people
who are just barely shuffling along
barely getting around you know I mean
we're moving one step closer to that
every moment of Our Lives assuming that
we live long enough
ah
um
so just
just reminding yourself that you're not
going to live forever
at least not in the same body
with the same personality and the same
name and all that
although the thing is
um if you keep doing something over and

over again

uh you just get used to it it stops

having the effect like

um part of my practice as a monk is you

know contemplating death you know when I

was a monk and so I actually went and

observed a couple of autopsies

and um you know the first time I went

into the morgue and saw dead people up

close I mean it was uh you had a really

strong sense of some Vega it's called in

poly which is a sense of urgency like

just like alarm it's like I gotta get

this done you know I gotta live a

spiritual life not waste my time on this

planet

but uh you know after you keep doing it
then it just kind of wears off it's like
um I had a human skull in Burma that I
had sitting there I had a human skeleton
that with all the the bones linked
together with wires and I had it sitting
in the meditation posture out in front
of my cave and after a while it's just
like a picture on the wall it's like you
just stop noticing it you know some some
filter in your brain just kind of
filters it out as a background noise
so you may have to innovate every now
and then to keep it fresh
but um yeah just remind yourself that
you're not going to live forever
and um I mean that is a about as good of

a recollection of death

as as you can get it I mean it is it
does seem to be effective although I
haven't died yet this time so I can't
say how well it's going to help me when
that time comes

uh see

he keeps going here I've heard that some
of dubbed yogis can pick the time of day
that there's a slight shift or shiver in
the body when they pass on

um yeah there's I've read mainly stories
of like Zen Masters like in like
medieval Chinese Zen Masters or Chan
Masters who uh one of them just uh sent
out invitations to his death you know

little cards because you know just in advance he knew he was going to die at a certain time and he just gave a little talk and uh yelled Cuts or something like that and just died

so yeah I guess some Adept Masters um they may not pick the exact moment of their death but they kind of know they can see it coming in advance

and uh to see the last part of this question is on that note I've heard that there can be anywhere from instant to 49 days from Incarnation to Incarnation can you explain

um Terra Vada the the official uh stance of terravada Buddhism is that it has to

be instantaneous like the moment of death

you know when your your stream of Consciousness stops in this body the very next moment like one trillionth of a second later it's gonna start up somewhere else

um like if you're taking human life it'll start up right in a like a an egg being fertilized by a sperm right that conception

so the stream of Consciousness or the uh your your stream of karma I guess would be a more accurate way of explaining it your karma extreme just cuts off here and just immediately the very next

moment starts up in a new abode

um the Tibetans I think have the 49 day

thing where you're going through the

Bardo Realms you're going through like

this sort of a limbo

um but even that you could say is is

just another existence it's just a 49

day long existence before you take a

like a longer term existence as a human

or a Deva or a

tortoise or something

so

yeah

the way it actually works in reality it

may not necessarily be a strictly

according to books either theravada

Buddhist books or Tibetan Buddhist books

um I've read some accounts of
reincarnation by Ian Stevenson who is a
professor I think at the University of
Virginia

um who was collecting data on
um especially children who could
recollect their past lives
and um some of some of the the cases
just do not fit what you would expect
from from Buddhism like there was one uh
really strange case in India where there
was a boy he was a relatively young boy
but he was like at least seven years old
I think and he died of smallpox and his
father went out to just make
arrangements for the funeral and when he

came back home the kid was alive again
you know he had recovered you know he'd
been like at the point of death and then
just came back again but he had a
different personality when he was
claiming to be a brahmana who lived in
some neighboring town and he had all
these you know I mean he was from then
on he would refuse to eat food cooked by
his parents because they were of lower
lower class lower caste there was a
neighbor lady who was a brahmana who
would have to prepare his meals and so
forth

there was another case

um in a different book by Ian Stevenson

this is a Thai monk so he was a terrible

at Buddhist but he was saying that he took rebirth into his present body before his previous body had had completely died he was like an old man who was bedridden and he's just sort of drifting in and out of Consciousness and so

um this Monk

claimed that he could recall sort of Shifting sort of commuting back and forth between the embryo in the mother's womb and the the body that was sort of gradually dying

and so I mean it's hard to say exactly how it works and I assume it's not the way people think it does it could be

just beyond our comprehension

so I think uh I'll just move on to the next question considering that that is just the first question we got lots of them we're already 10 minutes into this so I'll just move on to the Arya swasti projects and next question

since Buddha or if Buddha made the distinction between pain and suffering can you explain the difference between the two according to Buddhism

well both pain like physical pain and mental suffering can be called dukkah um like there's three kinds of Duca the first kind is duka duka which is just you know toothaches or stubbed Toes or headaches or whatever

um nausea that kind of a thing and then
there's

um we Pottery namaduka which is the duka
caused by changing circumstances just
sort of clinging to what you prefer and
it keeps changing from that
and then there's

um

Sankara duka which is just the sort of
the the general [__] that you have to
put up with just to be alive you know
brushing your teeth having to work for a
living that sort of thing the curse of
Adam in other words
fake chocolate milk

I mean really pain is a physical

sensation and suffering is essentially
desire or craving wanting things to
be a certain way just insisting that
things be a certain way or just just
being attached to a certain way of
things that isn't necessarily in
accordance with empirical reality
so yeah pain is just a physical
sensation like you know just any other
physical sensation like an itch or just
warmth or coldness or just um you could
even say like visual Sensations like
colors sounds those are just uh they'd
be like wait enough in in poly it'd be
like feeling
whereas the suffering of of dukkha like
as a mental state that is caused by

desire so pain and suffering are not the same thing I mean they can both go by the term duka and Pali but the pain doesn't make you unhappy any any tough guy can tell you that you know a little bit of pain never hurt anybody you know some some guys like a certain amount of pain they like a little pain in sex they're like a little pain in exercising or mountain climbing or anything like that

the suffering comes from Desiring the pain to stop

that is what causes the actual suffering and I have to admit it's pretty hardwired into the body especially like

a toothache you know something really close to your brain where it's got like a really short connection there it's uh it's it's not easy although I get gout sometimes it's like a pain in my toe and I can detach from that my pain can or my my foot can hurt like hell but still I can I can be equanimous just because I don't really care that much they may be inconvenient if I'm limping but so long as you don't desire the situation to be otherwise it's fine I mean your body is feeling pain but you're not mentally suffering that's uh the difference between the two according to a Buddhist although I don't recall

um any sort of serious discussion of it
in the in the poly texts
other than just talking about the
different kinds of Duca and that sort of
thing
so we'll just move on to the next
question also from the Arya swasti
project
and the Aria Swansea project says
since desirelessness is fundamental
tenet in Buddhism how can someone
justify chanting to bless a person place
situation Etc it seems that chanting or
praying even for good is a violation of
Buddhist
behavior and belief

well it seems to be that there's the
Assumption here that blessing someone in
necessarily involves desire you know
it's like in in blessing someone's like
may you be well may you be happy
um it's it's not necessarily that you're
craving them to be happy
um I mean it's just you could argue that
you have to have desire in order to do
anything you know your car gets a flat
tire you get out and change the tire I
mean it's not because you're craving the
tire to be changed you just see that you
know it's the thing to do I mean it's
just what needs to be done and so you do
it and some monks I mean they they may
see blessings that way it's just kind of

their duty to bless people and it makes
like devout Buddhists at least in Asia
feel very happy to be blessed by a monk
that especially if they consider the
Hmong to be a a seriously practicing
monk who has some kind of attainment
they may feel genuinely blessed
so

um yeah just because you're chanting for
something I mean it doesn't necessarily
mean that you are a craving
what you are chanting for
you know just like you know you you do
anything it doesn't mean that you're
like attached to the goal or the outcome
of the action like like changing the car

tire like I mentioned

so um I think there's a little more

along the same vein here so I'll just

move on to the Aria swasti Project's

next question which is a similar one

what is the difference between chanting

for some kind of change and Western

ceremonial magic or Christian prayer

that also is desirous of a change well

again

um just because a monk or a Buddhist or

anybody is chanting especially with

regard to

some purpose of the chant you know

different different kinds of chant or in

in poly they're called parita

um they have different purposes like

there's the chant you you chant it's
like the fish King jotica in times of
drought in order for it to rain so that
the crops won't all fail or
um the anguli Mala suta is chanted for
women uh who are soon to to be in labor
or who are having difficult labor or
um

oh what's the one with regard to uh
sickness

gosh I should remember these things
anyway then there's there's one for uh
like the metasuta is mainly for for
enemies or people who are or other
beings that are causing trouble
um there's the condo suta which is for

protection from mainly snake bites

although it's also for any kind of like
vicious animal any kind of bitey kind of
animal

um so I mean you can do the chant with
an equanimous mind

you know you just that's what you do you
know it's just kind of the duty it says
in the book that that's what it's good
for so you do it for that you know it's
sort of like taking medicine

you know you got a cold you want to take
some kind of cough medicine so you won't
cough so much it's you don't you're not
necessarily doing it out of a craving to
to abolish coughing

you know it's just like well this is

what's the problem is and this is what
is done you know you know this is just
what you do to make the situation A
little better so that my head will be
clearer I'll be able to sleep or
whatever

so

um it differs from different people I
mean you could have ceremonial Western
magic or a Christian person praying you
know they also they're not necessarily
attached or craving something
you know they can have an equanimous
mind also

um

just as two Buddhists can do exactly the

same chant for essentially the same

reasons you know they're chanting the

condo suta

so that uh they'll be at peace with the

animal Realm

and uh one of them is just uh afraid of

being bitten by snakes and he was just

clinging to anything he can do to

protect himself from snakes and

scorpions and centipedes and so forth

whereas the other one he's just

beaming meta to animals and it's just

like a side effect that it makes him

less likely to get bitten

so just because you do something doesn't

necessarily mean you're craving it to be

done like even an arahond supposedly I

mean according to the texts our haunts
bless people the Buddha who was fully
enlightened presumably he went around
for a very long time many many years
just

teaching people out of compassion
so just because you're doing something
especially or doing something that has
some you know beneficial result doesn't
mean that you're doing it because you
are craving the beneficial result

so we'll just move on to the Aria
swelocity project next question

how would someone chant for a successful
business how would we know we're in
acceptable parameters I see a lot of

True Blue Buddhists not blue hairs
chanting and praying for material things
quite a bit are they practicing Buddhism
or something else warm regards I've been
told that Soka gakai is a kind of
Buddhism where people will be praying
for TV sets and that sort of thing
um but I really don't have much exposure
to so kagakai
um in Burma if like someone is starting
a successful business
they might have monks come in chant
parita just to bless the new building
you know they got this new shop they're
gonna start they'll invite monks they'll
offer them food you know they'll bow to
them maybe offer them robes or something

and ask them to chant

and the monks will chant the parita you
know just blessing the shop

and um also in Burma someone starting a
new business will also usually

um consult with like a fortune teller
who will tell them what kind of name to
give to their business because they use
a lot of word magic in Burma and so you
have to have usually you have like two
words

that have the first letter of the two
words just sort of cancel each other out
so that anyone trying to to curse the
business like some competitor hires a
wizard to curse you

um that it doesn't get a good grip on
the name because the name is kind of by
its very structure sort of like a
stealth name

it's weird but I've I mean I assume it
does happen that you've got rich greedy
people like praying and chanting for a
success in business

um but I really haven't had much
exposure to that if any other than just
you know as a monk I was invited to
people's

um businesses and just you know you do
the chant which is just

um you know just putting a good vibe
into the into the building scaring out
any uh ghosts or goblins or anything and

um

you know it's just it's it's innocuous I

mean it's not necessarily harmful

you know it's it's not necessarily

misguided

but um chanting and praying for material

things yeah it's it's not the best way

of of spending your time I think

and uh are they practicing Buddhism

probably not what go to My Buddha

originally taught in uh the Ganges

Valley 25 centuries ago but of course

um you know Buddhism can be just about

anything nowadays so I mean they're

practicing some kind of Buddhism if

they're practicing Buddhists that are

chanting for

a new TV set or something

there's ways of doing it and it's like I

was implying earlier

it's it's really not the outward action

I mean this is just a common refrain of

these q and A's it's not the outward

action that is creating Karma it's the

mental States and two people can do the

same outward action with different

mental States and they'll get different

karma for it two people can do exactly

the same action one will be doing more

good than bad and the other one will be

doing more bad than good

so it's like

um like as a monk I'd go walk for alms

to do the villages in Asia

and there were some some ladies that
would only offer food if the neighbors
were watching

so or there was there was another one
woman the old old banana woman I still
remember this woman she ran a Fruit
Stand and

the only thing she would ever offer the
only thing she'd ever put into my bowl
were bananas that were so old that she
couldn't sell them anymore I mean they
were just black they were like they
smelled like wine you know they were
like liquid inside you could hardly you
couldn't even really peel one

and so I mean she was offering food into
amongst Bowl but I mean she's just
essentially dumping her garbage trying
to get Merit for throwing away garbage
so it's

it's really the mental stage to
determine the the ethical value
or the karmic value of an action
so I think I'll just move on to the next
question here this is the last question
by the Arya swasti project
and he says

I heard you speaking about the making of
the monk robes and you mentioned the use
of a cauldron for dyeing the material as
a monk can own only eight items is there
any rules on what items a monk can

borrow rent or use

I've seen the teravada monks at the
temple build and repair things with
power tools

they have access to computers television

Etc in base terms if it floats or flies

it's better to rent it anyway

it seems that amongst life in that

regard would not be too different from

regular life if all things are available

they just can't claim ownership your

thoughts well it is a misconception to

say that a monk can only own eight items

and that's the eight requisites

um which let's see if I can remember

these you got the three robes

which is lower upper and outer you got
the belt for holding on the lower rope
you've got the bowl you've got the
needle the water strainer
the razor

and uh let's see needle water strainer
razor I I knew I was oh that is eight
okay I was trying to think of what the
next one was gonna be so I mean really
those are called the eight requisites
and every monk should have those but
he's not limited to having those and if
you read the Winnie attacks there's all
sorts of things that a monk can own that
aren't those eight requisites for
example there's a ninth sort of a crypto
requisite which is the sitting cloth

all monks are supposed to have a sitting cloth even though it's not one of the eight requisites and then if you read if you read Linea you see there's all kinds of things I mean a monk can have sandals for example he can have a walking stick he can have a shoulder bag he can have like an ointment a little vial for ointment and a stick for smearing the ointment he can have tooth cleaning sticks he can have certain medicines you know for for his life he can he can store garlic as long as he wants as long as he's not using it to make his food taste good but he's using it for medicinal purposes like to

settle his stomach or something

so monks can own all sorts of things

so is is they're not limited to eight

um so I mean that that kind of answers

most of the question here

um there are certain things that monks

aren't allowed to own and that's

um money for starters and

um precious precious things anything

made out of gold or silver or certain

gems

um are not allowable for a monk he's not

allowed to even touch those things

unless

somebody drops it at the monastery and

he's just picking it up to put it in a

safe place until they come back that's

the only time a monk is allowed to handle money for example somebody drops their purse and leaves and just forgets it behind it's not only is as a monk allowed to handle money in that case but he's allowed to actually

um

he's allowed to handle it and just in order to put it somewhere I mean it's his duty if he doesn't do it it's against the rules

so

yeah I guess I guess it was just uh correcting this misconception that monks are only allowed to own the eight requisites I mean the requisites you

know they are required but there's all sorts of other things that a mom can own and if the Buddha were alive today he might be uh Banning you know he might be uh making like cell phones unacceptable something like that but um there's no rule against cell phones or computers largely because they hadn't been invented yet and so it never occurred to anybody to make the rule against it

so we'll just move on to the next

question this is from Tut DVD

this is kind of interesting one

if Buddhism ceases to exist does nibana cease to exist

well the concept of nibbana May cease to

exist

although assuming that members of other
spiritual systems can still become
enlightened they may call it by other
names

but nibana is a metaphysical State as
like the absolute

um just going Beyond any kind of state
maybe

um

yeah it doesn't really cease to exist

but then it's it just kind of goes

beyond the duality of existence and

non-existence and this is

just trying to discuss

certain things in Buddhism in which

reality is not reified you know Buddhism
just refuses to reify the absolute
and so you can't really say anything
about it

even to call it it is too much
so

nip on it as the concept May cease to
exist but nibana as the the absolute it
I mean it doesn't cease to exist it that
never began and it will never cease

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from George Washington
Centrist

and George Washington Centrist says are
arahants sewed Upon Us Etc pro-social
will a town Nation Etc that has more
arohans per capita tend to prosper and

be a better town or Nation than one with
fewer arahants all else being equal

well there's I don't think there's ever
very many Aura hunts

um you know all of New York City

probably doesn't have more than just a
handful I would assume

um I'm I'm just reminded of somewhere in
the commentaries

it is stated that the city of sawati
which was a one of the largest cities in
the Ganges Valley during the Buddhist
time

I had a population according to the
commentaries of 70 million people which
would be bigger than New York Tokyo and

Mexico City combined and that 50 million
of them like you know five sevenths of
them were Arias you know at least sewed
upon us

but um

yeah I I'm just skeptical of the whole
idea I mean even the idea of soda upon
us and so forth I mean I've expressed a
certain amount of skepticism over the
the four stages of sainthood in Buddhism
I do think that the the idea has
um been corrupted or to put it more
politely

um it's just evolved it has developed
over time and it's not the same as what
the Buddha was teaching originally
but um I I mean you think about this

sort of like uh you go back to Genesis in the Old Testament where God spares um a city if it has 10 good men or or even one good person living there he won't punish the entire town because that will involve him punishing the good person and I do think that there there can be something like that I mean if you have a lot of saints with really good karma living in an area that may help to protect the area from something really awful happening just because it's just not their karma to uh get Bubonic plague or die in an earthquake or something so that's it's possible I mean if you go

with that attack

um yeah although even arohans can have
bad karma from their past they're not
making any new Karma so you can't really
say that they're generating Merit
and like Mama galana who is the Buddha's
left-hand man he was one of the Two
Chief disciples

um he was literally beaten to a pulp so
I mean he didn't have such good karma
that he didn't get just brutally
murdered

so

I would assume overall going with like a
statistical trends that a high number of
saints in an area could very well

um

blend some protection against really
awful things happening although
um I don't really have a lot of data on
that so I can't really say if the
hypothesis is valid
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from hey it's Tig
and this is kind of a strange one
he says in your video on the topic of
humans being a species of animal which
you did was heru you related a story
where you attempted to feed a wild
jungle fowl named chicken Lord you
mentioned that instead of eating the
peanuts the rooster instead vocalized
for his flock to come and feed you

didn't imitate the rooster's call and I
am curious as to what the king of the
chickens sounded like could you please
attempt your best imitation of this
sound thanks

well I learned from my father long ago
that a man cannot do bird calls without
looking ridiculous

because he always looked he had this
absurd look on his face whenever he
would do bird calls he was fairly good
at it but still it just wasn't worth it
wasn't worth the effort

um yeah there was when I lived in this
one Monastery in Burma

there were a lot of red jungle fowl
um roaming the area

and also somebody turned loose a hand at
the monastery just to get to earn Merit
some fortune teller says you need you
need Good Karma you should rescue a
chicken from a butcher turn it loose
Monastery so a lot of people would get
this advice from fortune tellers and
some of them I mean it was just like
spiritual materialism they just you know
take baby chick or take chicken release
it monster and they bring like this
little fluffy chicken like this this
little baby chick
and I would tell them it's like that
baby chicken is going to last two days
three days tops you know they're monitor

lizards there's Hawks there's all kinds of predators a baby chicken like that isn't going to survive and they just get like this sick look on their face like I don't want to hear this

I just supposed to release this a chicken here you know

so anyway somebody released this hen that was like of a fighting chicken breed like a game hen

and she had like skittish Wild

instincts and also she was sort of a drab brown color and so she survived long enough to uh hook up with

a red jungle fowl rooster and she had babies and the babies were about a third grown before she finally got killed by

something

um and one of these babies of hers grew up in the chicken Lord who was half game [__] and half red jungle fowl and he was mostly red jungle fowl I mean the red jungle fowl jeans apparently are dominant in most cases

um

so the case he's talking about here is I would

um I had a little jar of peanuts I got lots of peanuts when I went for homes so I keep this jar of peanuts and feed the the wild chickens when they would come and uh I knew that once they learned what peanuts are they really like them

and so chicken Lord was the king of all the chickens in that area and one time he came by himself he didn't come with this little Harem of hens so I threw him the peanuts and he wouldn't eat them I knew they liked them but he wouldn't eat them instead he walked away went up a hill a little bit and then crowed you know it was just a cock-a-doodle-doo the hens came running he led them back and he's making sort of the crooning clock that a chicken makes like hey I found something good and he even picked up one of the peanuts held it on his Beak from one of the hens to take from him and in a human that would be considered gallantry you know

but uh he was just following chicken
instincts red jungle fowl instincts I
guess but I guess the main question here
is what did it sound like and I'll just
tell you like a red jungle fowl rooster
um it's it's like a barnyard roosters
cockadoodledoo except has one less
syllable it's like cock-a-doodle-doo and
it's like soprano it's very high pitched
it's more high-pitched than the average
Village or the average domesticated
rooster
so it's like a soprano cock-a-doodle-doo
and you can you can uh
do that one yourself if you like
and I'll just move on to the next

question

oh wait wait I almost skipped this one I

did that last time this is this is

another question but hey it's Tig

and Hayes Texas have you had to deal

with either voluntary or involuntary

sleeplessness when you were a monk I

read and can also attest from my own

experience that austerities and ascetic

practices often lead to the

practitioner's inability to sleep or

fall asleep normally

what are your thoughts on this thanks

um I think everybody has had involuntary

sleeplessness or just insomnia

occasionally I mean just for whatever

reason you drank too much Asian Red Bull

or something and you couldn't sleep but most of the sleeplessness that I recall as a monk were was voluntary because uh if you read the text the monk is only supposed to sleep about four hours per night and I'm I've always been a sleepyhead before I was a monk I'd preferred about nine hours of sleep and so trying to go from nine hours of sleep to four hours of sleep I was just like a walking zombie at first and I'm I'm just my body needs more than four hours sleep unless I'm doing really good meditation practice the only one time in my life

was I able to

go for an entire month averaging less

than four hours of sleep per day

and that was I was some of the best

meditation practice of my life so if

you're doing intensive meditation

practice you don't need to sleep as much

but um there was another time I was at a

Meditation Retreat

and I was trying to get by on like five

and a half or four and a half hours of

sleep per night four and a half to five

and I was starting to dream like almost

to the point of hallucinating before I

was even asleep I'd be like sitting in a

meditation Hall trying to meditate and

there'd just be all these images coming

up and like somebody would be standing
in front of me talking I'd be about
ready to answer and then I realized wait
wait you know I'm sitting here in a
meditation Hall in Burma
so I had to get up to about five and a
half hours of sleep and then the like
the hallucinations or the the waking
dreams would uh wouldn't start until
like the last meditation session of the
evening and that was manageable
but uh yeah there were times I do like
vigils I think they're called vigils
like an ajan cha tradition uh often
fueled by a Red Bull and Asian Red Bull
is way stronger than

than Western Red Bull

um

yeah

but um the the austerities and ascetic
practices

um they didn't really lead to an
inability to sleep or fall asleep
normally it was just that um I was
deliberately trying to sleep less
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from jeffrey88

and Jeffrey 88 says what do you think of
Kundalini Yoga practice I got into
Kundalini after hearing that Bruce Lee
practiced it I am convinced that helped
him get his lightning fast speed
and the fact is I really don't know much

about Kundalini

um and if you don't know much about

Kundalini you shouldn't practice it

because I've heard that that practicing

Kundalini Yoga without a skilled teacher

can be dangerous you know you can uh

blow out the the what is it the the

Kundalini it's like an energy Channel

going up going up your spine

in the the seven chakras are all

connected with this Kundalini Channel

and I know a little I know a little bit

about the chakras and all that but um

yeah I'm I'm fairly ignorant with regard

to Kundalini Yoga practice because I've

never practiced this it's like a Hindu

thing

so um yeah maybe maybe Bruce Lee was so
fast and could catch a fly with
chopsticks

um because of that but um

I don't know

so let's just move on to the next
question this is from rui

and rui says

hello Ponyo can you speak on the
duration of first Jonna I've heard that
it permeates one's being an existence
permanently once it is reached or
experienced or doesn't require constant
cultivation

well this question reminds me of the
god of the sun Mutiny Kyle which

is one of my favorite sutas just because
it's so weird

and there was a monk named gaurica who
was living at the Black Rock and easy
Guinea cave and he kept getting Jonah
and losing it and getting it and losing
it and getting it and losing it and this
happened seven times finally the seventh
time he got Jonah and he was singing to
himself if I die with Jonna I'm
guaranteed of a Brahma realm at least
but if you die without Jonah there's no
guarantees of anything and so he before
he lost John of the seventh time he
committed suicide he cut his own throat
and then he became an aura hunt he

became enlightened at the moment of
death

so that would suggest that

um you know once you get it you know
it's

you know it doesn't just abide in you
permanently

I mean it has what you could consider to
be permanent effects you know like
someone who takes LSD and has like a
spiritual like a mystical experience or
even without the LSD you have a mystical
experience even though the mystical
experience ends then it gives you this
memory or this this new frame of
reference

that you know that can be fairly

permanent but I mean the mystical State
itself is not permanent and it's the
same way with John I it it seems to me
that the John Estates are not permanent
if if they were permanent they would be
unconditioned and that'd be you know
Enlightenment itself but anything that
is conditioned and that's all for genres
are conditioned States then they are
impermanent and so there may be a
permanent like lingering after effect of
having John I mean it will cause like a
significant shift in your perception
that may be lasting but the state of
Jana itself is not lasting
so it may require a constant cultivation

if you want to keep attaining Jonna you
want to master it you want to become an
Adept at Jana

so we'll just move on to the next
question this is from Fred

and Fred says can Merit really be
accrued if so where is it stored well
Merit is just a certain shift in uh in
in the Stream of your karma you know of
in the momentum of your your psychic
energy you know Merit would be sort of
an upward shift in that
so it's I guess it'd just be stored in
the momentum of of like the mental
energy

that is your

your karma your son Carlos

so I mean it's it's not stored in a
container it's not stored in like the
the Allah Allah the storehouse
Consciousness that some of the yoga
Chara Buddhists of Mahayana talk about
um it's just that This Moment by moment
a stream of of like

Consciousness and mental States

you know it just has a different
momentum to it you know just a shift in
the momentum and and that is uh
where you could say it is stored but
really it's

um it's it's not really stored it's just
the momentum you know it's like
um if you've got

like a road that's that's moving
eastwards you know you don't say well
where's the eastwardness stored I mean
it's just the road is just headed in
that direction

which is kind of a bad analogy and so in
embarrassment I'll move on to the next
question this is from Irene

and finish the uh

now it's time for

uh purple drank

and Aaron says Define belief versus
faith and how those Concepts relate to
Buddhism

belief versus Faith well belief

um I I did a lot of contemplation of
this whole notion of the belief and

perception and so forth

and I came to the conclusion that belief
is perception belief and perception of
the same thing

also perception and samsara are
essentially the same thing

so belief is a kind of delusion belief
is

just the idea that you know something
that you don't really know

faith on the other hand

mainly means the same thing mainly

belief and Faith are the same although
faith can also have other

interpretations

like I've mentioned more than once Saint

John on the cross and dark faith

where

with with Saint John of the Cross he was

a Mystic and he he like

systematically cultivated mysticism or

what in in uh the uh contemplative sex

of of Catholicism called contemplation

which is like meditation except you're

not thinking anything

and so Saint John of the Cross would say

anything that isn't God just dismiss it

from your mind you know God Can't Be

Imagined so you dismiss the imagination

God cannot be understood through reason

so he out goes out goes reason God

cannot be seen or felt or heard or

smelled now go the senses until just

every mental state
is since it cannot know or contain God
you dismiss it until everything is
dismissed and then you realize that
there's still something there and
according to Saint John of the cross
that is the all-pervasive spirit of God
and he called that awareness dark faith
you're not thinking anything you're not
believing anything it's just that
there's this awareness
of this unspoken unspeakable reality
like down in your core
so that kind of face if you can call
that Faith would be superior to believe
but as a general rule belief and Faith

are the same although in Buddhism the
term usually translated as faith is Sada
and some translators prefer well
renderings like um
uh what is it
not certainty
why am I having a mental block now
confidence
so they prefer something like confidence
and I mean that's not necessarily the
same as belief but
all in all
in very early Buddhism and in in like
majamika in Mahayana Buddhism belief is
delusion you just I mean it's just so
I'm sorry it's clinging to some some
saric symbol thinking that that is

reality when it's not

so I mean the Attica Wagga of the sutiny

Pata says that a monk should not believe

anything

and it's not that he's a skeptic it's

just that he's a Mystic and he he knows

that reality cannot be contained in

beliefs reality cannot be contained in

mental perceptions

I mean it sort of underlies all of that

but the reality is just you can't know

it through symbols because you once you

symbolize it it's not reality more

anymore

also there are a few texts at least two

two passages that say a monk should have

no face one is in the antagawaga and one
ironically is in the domapon
so I think I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Austin
and Austin says I know you haven't been
doing sitting practice since you've
disrobed but have you done at least one
sitting practice on LSD I would like to
know how that would go for someone of
your caliber maybe you could achieve
higher qualities of meditation
well as it turns out I did meditate on
LSD once I was in Burma at the time I
tried to do it a second time but uh
it didn't work out quite so well
also I've meditated on Ayahuasca more
than once then that's just I mean almost

in desperation or

um you're just trying to just kind of

keep a grip on yourself

but with the LSD one is what Austin here

is asking about

and I went to Burma and a friend of mine

had given me a little vial of liquid LSD

and it was supposed to have you know 50

drops or 100 drops or something when it

was full some of it had already been

used there was so there should have been

two doses left let's say

eight drops you know and so there should

have been like 16 drops there so the

first night that I took it you know I

took the recommended dose and I

practiced meditation I was

um

really something like LSD it just

overwhelms everything else including my

meditative efforts I think and I mean

you I went almost every time I had I

have taken LSD in my life

almost every time it's it's a mystical

experience it's a religious experience

where everything is just a manifestation

of infinity and Divinity and perfection

just just everything

so

um meditation could have quieted it down

maybe a little bit quieted down the the

mental actions but

on that particular time

I was in the dhamma Hall of this
monastery

I was living in a little room off the
side of the main Dharma hall or Diamond
Hall and so I was sitting in the main
damoh in front of the big statue the
altar with this big Buddha statue there
and I was just overwhelmed with
gratitude and just

um I usually don't bow to statues but I
was bow into that statue over and over
again that night it was I was just in a
very devotional uh gratitude Orient
state

that time and then the second time I
took it I just took what was left

assuming that it would just be one more
dose and it was way more than one dose
it was it was like the most acid I've
ever taken in my life out of Burmese
Buddhist Monastery and I just pretty
much liquefied I just melted into the
floor I was

um yeah I wasn't doing much sitting
practice that night

so um

I hope that was entertaining if not
educational so I'll just move on to
Austin's next question

and Austin's next question is when we
don't have answers to hard-hitting
questions about say the accounting
problem is it better to have faith in

Buddhism than to be skeptical of its claims

I don't know it just seems like a very big problem for the religion and the accounting problem that Austin is referring to here is uh with regard to a question he asked in the the previous q a I think where he's talking about how you know the the the the universe is is has been here forever and you know little by little some beings are being liberated but I mean where is all the extra beings come from I mean why is it that there's more people in the world instead of fewer people in the world and um it's just trying to deal with

infinity I think I I remember in in that
q a when I was answering the first
question about this accounting problem I
was pointing out that song
there there may be new beings being spun
off
to replace the ones that are being
liberated and I do think that that is
possible that there's just new
generation of of beings that uh you know
karmic streams
that uh they're just taking the place of
the ones that are leaving
um also you can say there are infinite
number of Worlds so maybe some of the
the people that are being reborn into
this world

um the world they were on and just no longer exists or had a population crash for some reason and so they're just shifting over to this one or again I was saying that um in the in the last in the video where I was answering the first part of this question

um

that uh you know some people might be moving out from the animal realm or the ghost Realms which would account for why there are so many NPCs and just sort of uh people that are just sort of um sleepwalking and believing whatever they're told although I think people

have pretty much always been that way
so I don't think that there really is
that much of a an accounting problem
I mean it's kind of open-ended but
I don't think that it really is a
crucial stumbling block for Buddhist
philosophy in that there have been
an infinite number of beings in this
universe

uh suffering unenlightened beings
um with you know little by little you
know a few are are getting free
but why is it that they're still like
increasing number of humans in the world
they're coming from other realms or you
know alternate Earths
or like I said another possibility is

that they're just new beings that are just being spun off sort of like the the standing State Theory and cosmology I think we're getting a cosmology question lowered down

you know some people believe there's the big bang and then you know everything started there and then there are some who think that uh there was no big bang it's just that new stars and new matter are somehow just being spontaneously evolved and it could be the same way with um suffering beings in this universe they're just being spontaneously evolved so I really don't see that as a crucial

problem

are a very big problem

so I'll just move on to Austin's next question

any update on ajan punadamo coming back

if he can't I would really love to see

some videos with more monks maybe

venerable varapano can make more guest appearances

well

I mean he told Brian that he wasn't

ready to start up again with the videos

he got a lot of flack from some of his supporters

for being on one of Brian's UFO meetings

I'm going to be on one of them next

month I think but I won't be getting the

same sort of flack I think because I
already have the reputation for being a
a naughty boy or something
but it's possible if if I reached out to
John punadamo he might be willing to do
videos just with me or with me and
somebody besides Brian

I don't think that he got any Flack for
appearing with me maybe he did a little
but I think most of the problem was
that Brian

um

he's sort of uh a holocaust denier and
thinks Hitler did nothing wrong and that
sort of thing and that rubs some people
the wrong way for some reason

so um yeah I'm I don't think venerable
varapano would be
would be wanting to do any more videos
with me it was sort of a
um a conflict of view or something
that occurred with regard to his own
channel

I uploaded one video we did that he
didn't want

anybody but him to upload and I never
agreed to it I just uploaded it

um and he didn't like that so

but uh maybe on John punadamo I really
should contact him I suppose I've been
doing videos with uh other people and
just by myself

so I haven't really felt a urgent need

to do videos although I do like him and
he's he's very intelligent and it's fun
to talk to him so I mean that's still
still a possibility

so I'll just go on to Austin's next
question

what's your take on the whole trans
identity issue because for me this is a
complete non-starter for the reason of
self being illusory to my understanding
I believe non-binary is not identifying
with either gender is this hitting
closer to the mark of non-self

um well that's kind of two questions is
that the first one is what's your take
on the whole trans identity issue and it

is kind of interesting that in Buddhism
trans identity issues uh receive more
acceptance than in a Christian culture
like

um I've mentioned before that in Burmese
Villages like remote Burmese Villages
you can have trans people there you know
there's there's some biological male who
dresses like a woman and acts like a
woman calls himself by a female name
and the rest of the village will just
tolerate him I mean uh he might not be
the most popular person in the village
but I mean he doesn't get ostracized or
anything and that's partly because of
the Buddhist idea of rebirth that they
believe that this such a person is is

called a Lewin Za which is they're sort
of a

a manifestation of

of past Karma and in this case it would
be

um

someone switching over from male to
female or from female to male

um in the course of a a number of of
lives in their sort of mid-transition
between male and female

um so I mean that is

explainable

going with Buddhist metaphysics and just
Buddhist cosmology in a way that

um it just doesn't fit in with with like

Christianity in Christianity you know
God just creates you male or female and
you have to go along with that or
you're sinning against God and nature or
some such

but in Buddhism I mean there is there
are ways of explaining it

in some cases I mean nowadays A lot of
it is just a fashion trend it's like a
leftist fashion trend

ah

also

um it's just a sign of the decline of
Western Civilization that uh

uh eunuchs are rising into social
prominence which is a in the past was
considered a Tell-Tale sign that a

civilization was in Decline when eunuchs
start getting
um higher Social Status
although now
they're not called eunuchs they're
called something else
so let's see
the next part of the question is um see
to my understanding I believe I mean I
mean that's that's self view too I mean
to my understanding I believe you know
because for me so I mean there's
you're dealing in some sorrow you're
gonna have to be dealing with some kind
of self view anyway
even the Buddha would say you know I and

you and me and you know he'd be using
first person pronouns and so forth
um even though he's supposedly
presumably

um no longer had self-view

but uh getting to the next part of the
question here is uh non-binary is not
identifying with either gender is this
hitting closer to the mark of non-self
it would depend on the individual

because some people you know they're
just really big on me you know this it's
identity politics it's all about me I'm
just this alienated person who
nevertheless is identified with some
group or other and non-binary is like an
oppressed group that you get social

points for being a member of in certain
circles and so it's like a fashion trend
to be non-binary
and so some people will just cultivate
non-binariness
out of delusion or whatever
although really I mean if
if a person is like an evolved Saint
they might be non-binary too I mean they
just might not be sexual at all they
might have just left all of that behind
like Brahma beings in the high heaven
Realms in Buddhism you know there's no
male or female so it's all non-binary
you know they've just left sex behind
so that kind of non-binary would be uh

closer to the mark of non-self but just
following a like a fashion trend
and just taking on all covers being what
do you call it
uh not polyamorous but
they're just willing to have pan pan
sexism what is it or they're just
willing to have sex with any anybody or
anything
you know that that could be a kind of
non-binary too but that is uh
that's not a very highly spiritually
evolved state
so we'll just move on to uh Austin's
last question here
what's your take on cosmological
arguments the big bang and the Buddhist

idea of the universe being here forever
um well I can go along with the big bang
there's there's always been some
cosmologists who don't like it and I
think there's been kind of an upsurge in
recent years

of like people preferring like the
steady state theory that somehow
um you know new matter is being inserted
into the into the universe through
kind of quasars or something

um

but even the Buddhist idea of the
universe being here forever it's yes
like samsara is is just beginningless
and endless

um but nevertheless this like the astronomical Universe eventually dies and then is replaced by a new astronomical Universe which would be not so much in conflict with the Big Bang Theory uh especially if it's like

if the big bang you know eventually the universe starts collapsing in on itself and you get the Big Crunch and then and then it explodes again with another big bang that would be fairly similar not exactly the same but fairly similar to the Buddhist idea of

um you know evolving universes and devolving universes and you know expanding and Contracting and that sort

of thing

but

cosmological arguments I think it's all

academic really

because I'm really not a materialist

so but I mean even though I'm not a

materialist I can take certain

scientific theories as useful working

hypotheses or useful tools like

darwinian Evolution I mean it's very

elegant Theory it makes very good sense

the evidence seems to support it so I

can say okay even though

um I do think that

physical matter cannot be said to really

exist unless there's some kind of

perceiving mind to perceive it and when
you're back at the stage of anaerobic
bacteria a billion years after the earth
was formed then

um who knows maybe it was Davis

oh that were that were perceiving it or
something

but uh yeah the Big Bang is similar I
mean

there is some it seems like most of the
evidence seems to support it better than
other theories so I'm willing to go
along with it until the the whole Theory
gets overthrown

so the next question is from Raphael 46.

formerly known as Rafi 46

and Rafael 46 says did the Buddhists say

that soldiers who kill go to hell even
if they killed in self-defense
that's a good question I don't recall
any sutas that say that although it
wouldn't surprise me if there's some
obscure suta or just some suta that I'm
forgetting

that does say that soldiers will go to
hell

um I mean there's a Suitor that says
even like actors and comedians will go
to hell musicians and which is I mean
that's that's pretty harsh that's that's
really pushing it I'm kind of skeptical
of that

that um like musicians and and Comedians

and actors are all going to go to hell
some of them will presumably but um just
just because they're actors I don't
think that's that's gonna do it or or
musicians and soldiers are definitely
making weighty or Karma than most
entertainers

and so yeah I mean they're going to have
some sort of karmic effect from from
killing even if they killed in
self-defense

and uh and Buddhist ethics are very
strict

even though it's an atheistic system
with no God decreeing that you must do
this and you must not do that it's just
like how how the mind works it's based

on human psychology

and

yeah if you're if you're you pretty much

have to be a saint like a renuncian you

have to renounce Society

in order to

really be as ethical as is possible to

be

to make us a little bad karma as

possible

so it may be that the Buddha did say

that soldiers who kill go to hell

even if they killed in self-defense

but um I do think that in a Buddhist

culture it is

advisable to have the idea of the

soldier as the tragic hero who
sacrifices his own spiritual welfare for
the sake of others so that they can live
in peace and practice Dharma
so next question from Rafael 46 why
didn't the Buddha preach against
polygamy and polyandry
well

I assume he didn't preach against
polyandry because it just wasn't a thing
polyandry is like one woman having more
than one husband
and that's relatively rare in society
especially in traditional societies
there I assume there have been like
matriarchal civilizations
um or cultures that uh you know one

woman would have more than one man but usually it's the other way around just because of biology

I mean one woman with one husband is gonna have approximately the same amount of children as long as her one husband isn't shooting blanks as one woman with with 50 husbands whereas one man with 50 wives can have approximately 50 times as many children as if he had only one wife

and one of my favorite examples of that is King monk cut of Thailand

I don't remember which Rama number he was but he was a monk until he was about 40 years old and then his brother the

king died he was next in succession he dropped out of the monk Hood to become king and even though he became King when he was about 40 he still managed to have approximately a hundred children by a large Harem of wives

um but getting back to the Buddha here why didn't he preach against polygamy uh well I mean his own father married more than one wife

I mean is according to the legend anyway um King sudo now

Buddha's father married two sisters one was uh mahamaya the Buddha's mother and one was uh mahapajapati go to me who was uh his aunt and also his his stepmother

something like that

so I mean it was just a cultural thing
in India at the time it was pretty much
Universal I don't think there was any
need for him to preach against something
that probably

um people weren't going to take very
seriously anyway I mean he he didn't
preach against eating meat or at least
he didn't preach against me you know
butchering animals and so forth he did
maybe a little bit like with regarded
cows especially

um you know there's not much point in
preaching against War because he knew
that it just wasn't realistic Kings were

going to keep having Wars and they
certainly did including Buddhist Kings
but I mean he just he would teach
something if he felt that it was ripe
you know like animal sacrifice he
preached against animal sacrifice and it
was just that India was just ready to
kind of let go of animal sacrifice for
the most part there's still some animal
sacrifice going on in India like at Kali
temples and so forth but uh
uh I don't think it would have served
any purpose for him to preach against
polygamy and who knows maybe he didn't
have any problems with it at all I mean
he was a son of a polygamous father and
he turned out pretty well

so I'll just move on to the next
question also from Raphael 46.

bikubody argues in his introduction to
the young Guru and nikaya that there
appears to be Corruption of the sutas by
the compilers his reason is that those
sudas

suit us where the Buddha allegedly
disparages women are in stark contrast
with others where he receives lay women
his ordination of women his chief female
disciples and the role of female lay
benefactors is this a legitimate opinion
or an attempt to adapt Buddhism to the
21st century well bikubody is definitely
a biased Lefty in his politics and so if

he sees that there's some corruption
because it's you know some sutas are
saying this and some sutas are saying
the opposite

he's going to be inclined to favor the
idea that the Buddha really taught the
most politically correct stuff and that
the politically incorrect stuff is less
likely to be by the Buddha just because
the Buddha was wise and so he must be
politically correct by 21st century
standards

um then no doubt there is some
corruption in the texts there definitely
is corruption on attacks oh I just got a
notice that I have to plug in my
computer because the battery's running

dead

there

that would have been embarrassing to
have the battery run dead in the middle
of this

so yeah there is corruption in the text
not everything that the Buddha says in
the texts is likely to be you know 100
just reliably the teachings of the
Buddha that I totally agree with but
then to use that as an argument for just
dismissing the parts you don't like
and and emphasizing the parts you do
like yeah that's that's sophistry right
there

so I assume that bikubody is guilty of a

certain amount of sophistry based on
what I have read of some of his opinions
so I'll just uh
move on to the next question after
looking at this I want to make sure that
I answered this fairly well
at least mediocrity well
I think I just invented a new word
mediocrally
ah let's see
yeah I mean even if you look at the
ordination of women I mean he's using
the ordination of women as like evidence
that the Buddha really was in favor of
um you know equal rights for for females
and stuff but if you read the text I
mean he really did not like the idea of

ordaining women he had to be talked into
it by Ananda and even then he said well
Buddhism Will Survive only half as long
now because of women being ordained
so

yeah I think for the most part it's just
uh leftist ideas trying to
uh like adjust Buddhism to be more
leftist or some such more politically
correct

okay so the last question by Raphael 46
who was more ahead of his time in your
opinion the Buddha or Jesus
well by being ahead of one's time means
like you're you're ahead of the people
around you in your culture and no doubt

it had to be Jesus is way ahead of the people around him

which is one reason why Jesus's disciples just did not understand him very well or based on the New Testament

he didn't Jesus was not nearly as successful at teaching his disciples as the Buddha was the Buddha had lots of enlightened disciples according to the text whereas Jesus like even Saint Peter was lying and you know just denying that he ever knew Jesus on the night that Jesus was uh was arrested or or crucified or something I don't remember

the exact details

but yeah they just turned him in the sun

into the Messiah and just um you know

worship him as the son of God

at least some of them did

so

yeah the Buddha was

I mean there were a lot of other

teachers in Ancient India that

um

more peers of the Buddha I mean he

talked about enlightened beings

um you know in his time you know in in

the plural

and he wasn't necessarily talking just

about his own disciples although of

course that's blasphemy I mean to a
devout terravonna Buddhist only a
terravonna Buddhist can possibly become
enlightened but

with very few exceptions

but Jesus I mean he was I mean he was
like a

I just get the idea he was too advanced
for his culture and the cult the people
the products of that culture just did
not understand him and so they just
promptly deified him

so we'll just move on to the next

question this is from aurelian

and aurelian says

some of us still accept military

commissions or government appointments

despite what we know because we feel a sense of Duty to take on the futile work of trying to run things and perhaps make some small changes from within the system there are many Chinese and Hindu texts relating to public and Military Administration and good governance but I have not come across any specifically Buddhist texts on good governance I know there is the dialogue with King menander which I have not read but here it may be strictly philosophical in nature do you know any writings of early Buddhist origin on such topics well there are some sutas in the text where the Buddha is talking about you know the cause of

crime is is poverty and Kings should
like give subsidies to Farmers you know
give them seed grain and you know make
sure that they have enough to to start
out in in the agricultural business and
so forth and that will cause more
prosperity and less crime and so forth
there are some texts in the in the
Polytech in the polysutas themselves
along those lines and also with regard
to politics uh some of the inscriptions
of Ashoka

it was uh a little while after the
Buddha but it's early Buddhism and uh he
gives some of his uh
his political ideas
in like his uh Rock inscriptions and

pillar inscriptions

so you might look there

but yeah I don't think um

I assume there have been like Polly

texts on um I mean not canonical ones

but like

um just written in a Buddhist language

about good governance

but they're not very well known I assume

if you look you may be able to find such

a thing that may be written in uh

Sri Lanka in medieval times or something

so I'll just move on to aurelian's next

question here

it would appear that in many ways

Hinduism is closer than Buddhism to the

instinctive beliefs of the average
American belief in Soul Creator God
spelled gawd generally devotional
standpoint enjoyment of song dance
jewelry and frivolity the biggest issue
May well be giving up hamburgers do you
find Buddhism or Hinduism better
positioned to attract religiously
non-affiliated Americans in the near
future I think Buddhism just because
there's less mythological baggage at
least less mythological baggage that is
considered to be essential to the system
uh it's it can just be like dry
philosophy
um and to like scientifically minded
people

um it's just Buddhism is like rational
it makes sense it doesn't have a lot of
of Mythology that and just stories that
you have to believe

um

so I think probably Buddhism is better
suited to fit

um Western modern or post-modern

Americans or or just Western people in
general

um some people are gravitate more to
Hinduism like the hippies in the in the
late 60s early 70s tended to prefer
Hinduism to Buddhism although the
beatniks before them were more into Zen
Buddhism

so I think all in all just the the
rationality and the lack of like the
garish

you know the the blue stat the stat or
the the paintings of Krishna and he's
all blue and he's got sort of feminine
features and big eyelashes and you know
maybe multiple arms and

um yeah some people gravitate more to
Hinduism like new age is more hinduistic
than buddhistic but um

I think your average doctor or
engineer or

this average person in general would
like Buddhism just because it sort of
like stoicism it's it's just like a

um

I mean it just it just makes sense
so um yeah I'll just go and Buddhism on
that one and I'll just move on to
aurelian's next question
lots of questions tonight
the biggest difficulty I have faced in
accepting Buddhism is its relationship
to willpower will could be the very
characteristic of Western society that
most needs to be resurrected at this
juncture but seems to be the very thing
Buddhism seeks to kill perhaps the
problem lies more in language and
translation annihilation of the will
would be a serious issue to the wide
acceptance of Buddhism as it creates

difficulty for me personally I have come across the concept of lyria or energy as a paramita in Buddhism and this seems to be a related concept to willpower can you elaborate on the relationship of Buddhism and willpower as I think this is an extremely important topic and appears to have some Nuance that needs clarification

yeah wolveria is sort of like Resolute manly energy like lyria like the the V8 vir I mean it literally means man you know like the triumvirate virile in English

has the same Indo-European root um also there's uh the parami of uh aditana which means determination

where you just stick with something you
know you just
you don't give up
so I mean that's kind of willpower but I
mean

I assume that uh
it depends on on how you define will I
mean karma is well for a lay person
you're supposed to be doing good karma
it's not until you're you're like very
Advanced renunciant that you leave both
good and bad behind you you leave behind
all Karma

so
that most people in the world just are
not ready to annihilate the will and so

you cultivate like

wholesome

Karma you know you

wholesome will Goodwill

so that would be fine especially for

laypeople

um you know annihilation of the will

that's like very Advanced that's that's

what the araha does and there's there's

never very many of those and they're

just off alone in a in a forest

somewhere as a general rule just in some

cells somewhere in a Cloister

ah so let's see

Buddhism and willpower yeah well I mean

will is is like a good translation of

cheating now which is essentially what

karma is but I mean even so it's it's
sort of like what I was talking about
above where you don't have to crave
something in order to do something
and it's the same way with with will I
mean you don't have to have this this
will to do something in order to do it
like an aura Hunt is not creating any
more will because he's not creating any
more karma

and um

like um

I'll be demo philosophy has to invent
some new kind of what Korea cheetah like
functional Consciousness just so that
our Hans can do anything but really I

mean you just

I mean you're a you are able to act

without just like

having doing it through force of will

you know it's just you just do the right

thing like the more wise you become you

just see what what is to be done and you

do it maybe it's just your duty or just

this natural flow of what you're doing

and um

it doesn't doesn't require any kind of

like brute force of will like strong

like in uh

what's the inclination intention

volition

it just flows

like the the more wise you become the

less will you have to use to get
things done

until you get to uh like what the daote
Ching calls woo way or non-action

and you still you still do things like
there's like one of my favorite verses

of the aote Ching is let's see he who
follows learning increases day by day he
who follows Dao decreases day by day he
becomes less and less until he arrives
at non-action with non-action there is
nothing that cannot be achieved

so I think that would apply to uh this
uh

issue of willpower

but um for a lay person generating will

in in wholesome directions is still good
you're Gathering up Treasures in Heaven
it's not until you are ready to just
bail out of the entire system and very
few people are that you just Abandon All
will altogether

so the next question is from Mary
spelled m-e-r-r-y

and Mary says did you ever even for a
moment think that you had attained some
Advanced State like sodapana anagami or
araham ship

well there was one time when

I was like a spiritual growth spurt that
I went through and I won't go into all
the details we've already been at this
for almost an hour and a half and I'm

maybe three-fourths of the way through
the questions

but I just had this
click or something

um I won't go into all the details but I
was having a really good meditation like
some of the best in my life it was only
one other time in my life that I had
anything

comparable to that was guard too
the depth and quality of my meditation
and

I'll start anything well maybe I've
attained some stage you know but the
thing is that anything conditioned is
impermanent

and so it didn't last

so

I mean what state or anything I mean

it's best not even to to think about it

because

um

I don't know it just kind of locks you

in

so to speak

and of course like The Diamond Cutter

Sutra which is heresy because it's

Mahayana Buddhist so there's even a

solar panel doesn't think I am a soda

Palmer because they're already Beyond

self-view they're beyond I am this I am

that I am mine

so

yeah there was especially one time in my
life it was back around 2004 I think
where everything just got way better
you know it was just like
this like spontaneous mystical States
and so forth I've gone into some details
over it

um maybe I can just give a whole video
about it sometime

but um it it's just never the way you
think it is no matter how you think it
is or it's going to be it's just going
to be something different so it's best
not to waste too much mental energy
on that

so next question from Mary spelled

m-e-r-r-y when is your birthday gosh
that's a tough one isn't it
actually my birthday is Thursday every
Thursday

which is I mean if you ask a Burmese
person when it's their birthday their
Muay Nate which literally means birthday
they'll they'll tell you the day of the
week

so yeah although actually my birthday is
July 25th going with the uh the Western
calendar

I think my birthday in Burmese is the
fifth day of the waxing moon of wagong
so

yeah so because I'm born on July 25th
I'm technically a Leo although I think

all the astrology stuff is [_]

because we Leos are naturally skeptical

but I mean it's weird because I mean I'm

sorry to totally Sidetrack this very

simple question that could have been

answered in one sentence

with a digression on a strong astrology

but technically even though I'm a Leo

technically I was born under the sign of

Virgo because all Leos are born under

the sign of Virgo now because of

precession of the equinoxes

so you're not even born under the sign

that of your astrological sign anymore

which makes me wonder I mean is are Leos

now do they behave like Virgos used to

behave

or or what I mean they've done

scientific studies that show that people

born at different times of year have

different General personality Trends

although whether that included Australia

and like Argentina like south of the

Equator it could be a seasonal thing

so

I'm not sure about that so I'll just

move on to the next question this is

also from

Mary spelled with an e have you ever met

Kurt Cobain or other Nirvana members and

this is because

um we both come from Aberdeen Washington

and Kurt Cobain went to the same high

school as me but I think when I was a senior he was just a freshman so of course he was just a pathetic nobody I never heard of him or anything you know he's just some face in the Halls at best you know he didn't hadn't start uh singing professionally yet obviously so yeah I

I don't remember ever meeting any of the members of of Nirvana even though they we have the same Hometown I did have uh my stepbrother was Kurt Vanderhoof who was a guitar player for a band called Metal Church also he was in a punk band he was a drummer in a punk band called The lewd back in the early 80s

so and maybe Metal Church would be the second most famous band from Aberdeen Washington and I didn't I didn't know one of the guys fairly intimately because he was my stepbrother so I'll just move on to the next question this is from hereward the wake and hear word the Wake says in connection with Janna are there any teachers or Retreats and so forth that you would recommend

well I mean

Jonah and terravada Buddhism there are not a whole lot of teachers of it that I know of there's uh I mean the most well-known in a Burmese tradition would be Paul oxiano and Paul doya and

branches of palm doya they emphasize
Jonna although a lot of what is
practiced there not all of it
necessarily but a lot of what is
practiced at these places is is like
hypnotic trance it's like Auto hypnosis
self-induced hypnotic trance

um

and it's it's unfortunate that I really
can't think of any

teachers or Retreats or or monasteries

meditation centers that I could hardly

recommend as teachers of Jonna

partly because

most meditation techniques in Burma ever

since mahasi Seattle

are teaching so-called vipassana or
mindfulness based meditation

is one of the main

um

one of the main outliers or he's just
you know he's one of the few that aren't
doing that there are a few more there's
uh some famous monk who mostly lives in
Burma I think he does international
tours now

um

he's in the stay ingu mess in the
English tradition and it's the same
English tradition is is just a full
spectrum of the ridiculous and the
sublime and uh he does weird stuff like
he'll just require everyone to meditate

in the full Lotus position for like
eight hours without moving so that just
probably the agony just causes you to to
sort of dissociate from your body or
something after a while but I think that
might be a kind of genre system

um

let's see Letty Seattle who was the
teacher of the teacher of SN goenkamp or
was he the teacher of the teacher of the
teacher of SN goenka

and he was the teacher of uba kins
teacher I think so that would make him
the never mind anyway

um lady Seattle was uh I mean he taught
some Jonah but the lady Tradition now is

very LAX it's it's got a reputation for
not being a very serious tradition most
of the monks just aren't aren't
meditating

um the founder of my tradition Tom
poodle Seattle even though the standard
method that he was teaching was similar
to the mahasi method he was mindfulness
based nevertheless he did teach Janna to
some people or at least some on Tom
meditation like Katina

Katina no not Katina what am I saying
Katina for casinos it's like the colored
disc that you use as a meditation object
so

yeah but with regard to any teachers or
Retreats that I would recommend probably

the best that I know of there might be
like Thai Traditions I don't know of
like sinhali's traditions I don't know
but they're the ones I do know of would
be the obvious

uh

uh the obvious choice that would be the
best it's not perfect but it would it's
the best one I know of

so I'll just move on to the next
question from

I don't know if they did this on purpose
to just make it hard for me to say their
name but their name is

says

in the Attica Wagga the Buddha says to

hold no views which is something

theravada got this wrong but Mahayana

preserved this from pre-sectarian

Buddhism

what are some other things in the sutra

is that Mahayana have preserved that are

not believed in theravada are there

things that none believe in and it

wasn't preserved in either well that's

that's kind of a good question that's an

interesting question

um so essentially

what are early teachings like

pre-theravadan teachings of Buddhism

that Mahayana gets right that they have

preserved whereas theravada has not

preserved and as he says this the idea

that you shouldn't believe anything to
hold no views to cling to no views is uh
I mean it's taught in the outagawaga but
in the commentaries the Attica Wagga
they just

pretty much uh

um they they backpedal on that one they
say Well when it says you should have no
views it means you should have no wrong
views and when it says you should have
no perception it means you should have
no wrong perceptions which I mean what's
the point why even say you don't have
wrong views

yeah I mean that just goes without
saying or it would go without saying if

it wasn't said

um

so yeah that's a good question

um I would say there

there are a few obscure little fragments

in the polysutas that refer to Nirvana

as infinite formless consciousness

and in Mahayana they took the ball and

ran with it um like the Dharma Kaya or

the one mind there's there's a lot of

different terms for it in Mahayana

Buddhism that really are essentially

just going with the idea of Nirvana as

infinite formless Consciousness and that

got rejected by taravana but it's um

in a way it was maybe like an experiment

in trying to explain what can't be

explained

because eventually taravada did adopt
the wise position of just not reifying
the absolute

you know not trying to make any
assertions about the absolute because no
kind of assertion no kind of idea or
perception is going to stick to the
absolute something that is infinite and
formless

I mean you just

your mind can't

grasp it you cannot grasp that you can't
wrap your head around it at all

and so it's best to just leave it alone

you know just kind of refer to it

indirectly and you know go with the the
upanishadic idea of 1990 you know not
this not that

so that's one thing that I think

Mahayana

preserved even though it didn't really
catch Traction in in Terra Vada is the
whole idea of this this infinite reality
that pervades the universe

um

another one

is dependent coal rising or pedicia

I think probably the best

um account or explanation of dependent

core Rising is is in nagarjuna as Mula

majama kakaraka and that is a Mahayana

attack so at least it was adopted by the

bahayanas and rejected by the

non-mayanas

and um

you know just enterovada Pedic or

dependent core Rising just got

crystallized down into these 12 links

and you just memorize the 12 links and

that's that's supposedly it and um yeah

I really don't think so I don't think

that the Buddha himself taught the 12

links

so

um yeah I do think that at least in

majama Ka Buddhism which is a branch of

Mahayana

um they do understand dependent core

Rising better than taravana like um uh
avoidness or emptiness and
and dependent core Rising are are like
equated they're the same that is
everything is dependently colorizing is
what it what Mayana Buddhists mean when
they say it's all empty it's all void
and um like no self would fit into that
too like because it's just conditionally
real it's just sort of virtually real
so in uh teravada they do believe that
there are these ultimate discrete
realities in abidama there's this list
and there's 52 mental states that are
ultimately real 28 kinds of matter that
are ultimately real
uh Consciousness and also Nirvana is

just fit into the same scheme as all
this worldliness no sensitivity and then
maleness and just
hardness
cohesiveness you know and Nirvana is
just on the same list as all these other
ones so
um
the uh
the Mahayana Buddhists got that one more
correct than the Theravadin in my
opinion
um to some degree the mahayanas
uh did better in the idea of not
adhering to morality and observances
because in Buddhism it pretty much

crystallized down into like sets of
precepts

that you have to follow and if you don't
follow them correctly then you know you
have to take certain penances or do
certain confessions and so forth

um there was some of that in Mahayana
also but they they were sort of cut a
little more loose from the the silken
ropes of rules that you tie yourself
with

um

let's see I mean the one that CEO box
and the c pot Zeta now starts with into
holding those views even the mayanists
they give it lip service at least but of
course they're still having views

so and some of them might cling to those views even you know they they have the idea don't cling to any views so they cling to the don't cling to any views that kind of a thing

so those are just the ones off the top of my head that I can think of that uh Mayana Buddhism may get more correct

um just the idea that this is all an illusion it gets a lot more emphasis in Mahayana Buddhism

um

and I think tarawada did make the mistake of just reifying samsara and making it real you know they they admit

that we don't interpret it correctly but
still there is this Ultimate Reality of
all the atoms in the books on the Shelf
back there

um whereas in Mahayana that's you know
it's it's like illusory it's it's like
conditionally real it's it's conditioned
and therefore just kind of virtually
real which I think is more correct
but um

I just move on to the next question
and uh we're getting there we're almost
done this is the last questioner

he said his name is

Johannes

I believe

and Johannes says

it is taught that even a layperson who is an anagami or non-returner keeps the 10 precepts naturally and does not accept or use money for example the anagami gatikara was without gems gold silver or money and made his living by taking Earth that he eroded that had eroded from the riverbank and making it into pots these pots he left at the side of the road and anyone who wished could leave a suitable amount of rice or food and take the pots in this way gatikara supported himself and his blind parents see the gatikara suta of the Maji manikaya

this demonstrates how money is an

impediment to Enlightenment and how the truly enlightened do not use money the above quotes all prove that the acceptance of money by monks is not a small fault and that it can render a monk incapable of attaining nibana okay this is just like the preamble to the questions he's got some questions after this

um

yeah I think he's leaving out one of the just most golden quotes in the text and that is

um

there's the canonical account of the second Council in the the Vania chulawaga which is

which is interesting reading it's
talking about how the first Schism
occurred in Buddhism
and
you had some
say Western monks who were strict in
winnia who visited uh like more Eastern
word where the monks had already started
handling money
and
he wouldn't take money I mean he was
visiting this Monastery and people were
donating money and then the monks were
dividing up the money and they offered
him his share and he refused to take it
so then they started getting on his case

and they made him apologize to to the
lay people because he was like rude to
them by not accepting their money
so what he did he went to these lay
people and

he just started listing these
texts

in in the sutas and so forth and there's
this one where the Buddha is supposedly
saying that any monk who handles money
or accepts money is as foolish as an
animal he's surrounded by darkness and
he's

enslaved by the chains of his own greed
and I mean that is a canonical statement
I mean the original I don't know where
it comes from I might not be in the text

but the text in which he's quoting it
is I mean that's canonical
so

um yeah definitely monks aren't supposed
to handle money

for Lay people it's not so big of a deal
in fact it's pretty much necessary

I mean we can't all live like gotikara
who also wouldn't even dig the ground

that's why he was taking the uh Earth

that he eroded from a riverbank because

it you know it just falls off and it's

just loose dirt so he could just scoop

it up with his hands and use that

uh without having to dig the Earth

because if you dig the Earth you cut

worms in half and so forth

so

um

again though I am skeptical of the whole

four stages of saying hood theory that

has developed in terravada Buddhism

um it's it's used in Mahayana also

although the Mahayana Buddhists have

distorted it even farther

and like the whole idea of the anagami

or non-returner if you read the first

sutas in the idiotica which is a

polytext

um in the the kuruka nikaya it

apparently is using anagami in the sense

of an arahant

that an onigami or a non-returner is

someone who's just not going to get
reborn they're they're enlightened
they're in Aura hunt
and apparently it got corrupted or just
mutated into a stage below Aura hunt one
stage below our hunt so I'm I'm fairly
skeptical of any of these claims of
onigamisa or sodapanas or so forth
um

yeah I mean you you can read the the
suta the gatikara suta of the Maji
manikaya itself and make your own
conclusions I suppose
but um

as the Buddha says in the in the winnia
I think it is that uh if money is

allowable then sensual Pleasures are

allowable

but again

it's not the outward action

that is morally good or bad it is the

mental States the company the physical

action and so I assume

some people can handle money and not

like conjure up any

like unwholesome attachments or greed or

whatever and other people just can't

even if they don't handle money they're

still their mind is still all full of

defilements

so I'll just uh start answering the

questions I'm just commenting on this

Preamble here

so the first question by Johannes is
do you know of any other stories about
lay onigames in the polycanon and I'm
sure they're they're in there somewhere
but I've never been particularly
interested in in this sort of thing
because I am skeptical about just the
historicity of it
um and I mainly I was studying it when I
was a monk anyway so I wasn't really
interested in uh in late late people
although
um you know there have been supposedly
lay people that became fully enlightened
or at least non-bootest renunciants like
Bahia it was that's another one of my

favorite sutas that's in the udana udana

110 the Bahia suta who he wasn't a

Buddhist but he became enlightened

anyway

of course he got enlightened after

hearing a very zen-like

um sermon from the Buddha

um like on a top Indica was

I I assume he wasn't an anagami

but uh if he wasn't origami he was

filthy rich and an hanagami so he must

have used money he was at least a

sodapona and he was extremely wealthy

he had a wife too although according to

the commentarial tradition um they were

celibate he

didn't have sex anymore

so yeah if do I know of any other
stories about Leon agawis in the podcast
not offhand I I do not recall
so I'll just move on to the next
question

um just bearing all of that Preamble
stuff about how money is a spiritual
impediment and so forth he says how is
Right livelihood even part of the noble
Eightfold Path then it is more not doing
something rather than doing right
livelihood doesn't it just mean to not
harm anyone with how you earn your
living how is this different from just
the first five precepts and why does it
have a separate spot on the noble

Eightfold path wouldn't a bum practice
right livelihood consequently in another
suit how the Buddha speaks about people
staying away from activities like doing
surgery on the eyes ears Etc as part of
their Sila this sounds to me like even
Noble professions are ultimately an
impediment to Spiritual Development no
matter how good your intentions might be
or homeless people who just beg for
money consequently doing more for their
spiritual growth than people who try to
earn an honest living to support their
family

okay well there's a number of questions
in here I assume

how is livelihood even part of the noble

Eightfold Path well all of the Eightfold
paths are essentially not doing
something rather than doing something
all of the five precepts are not doing
this not doing that you know not killing
not stealing not sexual misconduct
um not lying you know it's all not it's
all just don't
so you can be perfectly moral by just
sitting there doing nothing
um with monks right livelihood doesn't
just mean
um you know not doing causing harm
so much as for
um a monk right livelihood to accept
alms without following the rules

correctly if you're not a conscientious
Monk and you are accepting alms that is
wrong livelihood for a monk

so

um you know it does have it does go
deeper for

for renunciants than it does for
laypeople

write livelihood you know it's just

um

there are other ways that a monk doesn't
do right livelihood like not taking
proper care of his requisites like his
robes and his bowl and so forth

um

obviously just like um

giving sermons in exchange for you know

I'll give this sermon at your your
Dharma Hall if you you know donate to
the building fund at the monastery
something like that that would be wrong
livelihood for a monk
but as a general rule right livelihood
is you're making a living in a way that
is virtuous and doesn't cause harm you
know there's a list of wrong livelihoods
like uh dealing in weapons dealing in
poisons dealing in animals for Slaughter
dealing in slaves which would also be
like a pimp you know any kind of killing
was like being a soldier for example
would be technically wrong livelihood
according to ancient Indian taravana

Buddhism

but I mean you have to have people like
that at least some people
in some of those professions just uh for
a society to to function properly
see how is this different from just the
first five precepts
um yeah I mean it's not entirely
different but it is for monks you know
right livelihood does go a little deeper
for monks
um wouldn't a bum practice right
livelihood consequently it depends on
the bum I mean like a a monk literally
is a homeless person who some of them
especially in ancient times just
wandered around homeless

so that aspect of being a bum might be
beneficial if if you have the associated
beneficial mental States going to most
bums like hobos do not because most of
them are

alcoholics or nowadays on on some kind
of drugs

let's see

this tells me like even Noble
professions are ultimately an impediment
to Spiritual Development no matter how
good intentions you might be

doing surgery on the eyes ears Etc well
in the Buddhist time doing surgery was a
much cruder Affair than nowadays

let's see our homeless people who just

beg for money consequently doing more
for their spiritual growth than people
who try to earn an honest living to
support their family again it depends on
the mental States it's not just the
outward actions or inactions it's the
mental States going on or not going on
and homeless people who just beg for
money some of them
are spiritually oriented people not many
now most of them are like drug addicts
and mentally ill people and so forth
but um yeah some of them are renunciants
so again it's uh
I mean the main point is it's not the
outward action so much as the mental
States associated with the outward

action that determine the like the
ethical quality of an act

so the last question by Johannes and the
last question of the evening

at last not that I'm complaining it's
good to ask questions and you're welcome
to ask questions but this is the last
one

tonight

in the story of gatikara it is said that
he experienced Bliss or pity for seven
days straight after he learned the
Buddha used some of his food and
materials to support himself does this
correlate with Janna in your opinion
it is said that an anagami is adept in

concentration and so consequently
gadhikara would be expert in Jannah
practice yet it is not mentioned that he
explicitly meditated or practiced a
specific technique this sounds like
formal meditation practice is not as
important as life decisions and
intentions to develop deep concentration
what are your thoughts on this
well just because he felt the experience
of bliss or PT actually is not so much
Bliss it's more like
like enthusiasm or exhilaration you know
it's like pleasurable interest I've I've
had some some uh writers have I've
interpreted it as that
um

but I essentially here it just means he
was like delighted for seven days
because he learned the Buddha used some
of his food and materials and I mean
that's like uh mudita or just like
sympathetic Joy you know like the
feeling of happiness that grandma gets
when the little kids are loving her
banana bread you know she just
the kids are liking it and she's just
happy that they're liking it you know
she's getting pleasure from their
pleasure or happiness from their
happiness and uh you know it's something
along those lines or I mean sometimes
like Buddhist people in Asia very devout

they've been

um trained since there are children that

you know one of the best things a

layperson can do is support monks and

when a monk like especially a famous one

with a high reputation for the

strictness of his practice and his

attainments and so forth if he's

actually accepts a robe or uses a fan or

eats the food that the people offer to

him I mean they can just be overjoyed

they just feel like they're blessed

so I mean it would be something along

those lines he just had like deep faith

in in the Sangha and you know Buddha

dhamma Sangha and uh he was just

delighted that uh the Buddha himself

used some of the stuff that he he
offered I assume that would be my
interpretation so it's not the same as
John I mean PT is one of the the factors
of Jonah you know up until you get into
the high genre in the lower genres you
experience PT but once you get up to
um what is it third genre then you're
not experiencing PT anymore

I'm pretty sure don't uh don't quote me
on that one

so

let's see does this correlate with Jonah
in your opinion it is said that an
anagami is adept in concentration but
yeah just because it is said that an

anagami is adapting concentration
doesn't even mean that I mean as I was
suggesting earlier onagami's
um it may be that originally it was a
synonym for arohaunt and then just that
they the Indians they love like
systematic lists of things I mean
they're just addicted to that at least
in Ancient India and um they just came
up with this scheme
with all these qualities that and the
different members of the of the the
hierarchy you know have to have you know
like a soda pun I can't tell a lie
although most of the people that I have
met that considered themselves to be
sold upon us they would tell lies at

least to the extent of giving this
[—] confessions when they have to
make confession where and when you're
making confession to another Monk you've
you've broken some rule you know at the
end the the one you're making confession
to says in future you should restrain
yourself and then the monk says yes sir
very good sir I will restrain myself and
they have no intention at all they just
keep breaking the rule and they're
considered to be
aryas at least in accordance with like
the mahasi tradition
so
yeah I mean

it's good to have a little bit of
skepticism with regard to a lot of the
stories about
like uh
exemplary Saints
because some of them are just really
over the top
not that there haven't been over the top
Saints
there have been quite a few even in
modern times
but um
let's see this sounds like formal
meditation practice is not as important
as life decisions and intentions to
develop deep concentration or it's just
your mental States really

um your mental states are way more
important than outward actions as I keep
saying over and over again

um

that seems

this sounds like formal meditation

practice is not as important well I mean

some some people have become enlightened

without any meditation at all at least

not deliberate systematic formal

meditation it can just happen to you you

know if you're ripe you've got good

parmies you know you maybe you've done a

lot of meditation in past lives or

something so that you're just kind of

right before it and then just the right

circumstance comes along and
knocks the the Apple out of the tree or
whatever

so that's it I guess I guess I hope I
answered this question I'm I'm not
entirely confident that I have answered
all of these questions adequately but I
do my best

and if you have questions you're very
welcome to ask those questions in the
comments below or if you have access to
my subscribe Star channel you can ask
them there if you have access to the
Discord server you can ask them there
there's a special q a room there and uh
just look at all the links below if you
haven't subscribed already you're

welcome to do so smash that like button
as people say and uh be happy

hello and welcome to episode 41 of
question and answer I am your host panio
Basa

and in a previous episode I happen to
mention that throughout most of my life
my Consciousness expands and contracts
like the Buddhist Cosmos except at a
much higher rate

and maybe less predictably

and uh I just gotta say that uh lately
the last few days especially my

Consciousness has been pretty well
contracted

it has been a rough week

but The Show Must Go On and I've got
lots of questions in fact

I thought that I was going to have a smaller number than usual of questions and then I started compiling them it turned out to be about the the usual number like up around 30 35 and then like the last 24 hours I got this onslaught of more questions so this is going to be kind of a long one I think and uh bear with me bear with me if I'm not like frolicking in my seat and and so forth like I sometimes do I didn't even bring anything weird to drink this time

so I'll just uh start answering questions and the first one is from Mary spelled m-e-r-r-y and Mary says

have you ever seen the movie Fight Club
do you think this movie illustrates some
of the Buddhist teachings I specifically
want to guest your opinion I think maybe
he means test test your opinion on the
burning hand scene

well I have seen the movie Fight Club in
fact it's one of my favorite movies it's
probably in my top ten not my top three
but my top 10 favorite movies and it's
definitely a guy movie it's like the
opposite of a chick flick

um there are some women that like it but
then there's some guys who like chick
flicks too

um see do you think this movie

illustrates some of the Buddhist teachings and specifically wants to guest or test my opinion on the burning hand scene well the burning hand scene I'm pretty sure is where they put what is it a lie a quick lime uh now it's live for making soap on the back of his hand and it holds it and he's got to like accept the agony before he can uh before Tyler Durden will will um alleviate the pain for him I know he's not allowed to go to his his Spirit cave and do visualization or anything he's got to be right there with the pain just experiencing it fully and accepting it and

this and some other things in in Fight Club you know just like you know they weren't allowed to have names which you could be considered you know supporting the no self idea

um you know there's death which supports you know impermanence and the inevitability of death and that kind of thing but I mean you could say that's in lots of movies just about every movie has at least some element of of Dharma or Dharma in it

so I don't think that uh the author of Fight Club under the book or the the writer of the the screenplay had Buddhism specifically in mind it's just

that there are some

virtues

I guess masculine virtues that are promoted in in teravada Buddhism that also happen to be promoted elsewhere

um so just because

um a movie is like promoting masculine virtues

doesn't mean that it's it's necessarily

a Buddhist movie so I think it's

probably incidental like coincidental

that fight club which is a good movie

um that it that it does happen to

overlap with some Buddhist teachings

so we'll just move on to Mary's next

question

and Mary says

I can masturbate without absence without absolutely no physical effort I mean no hand no anything just for the power of thought I have read the commentary to the specific rule in the putty mocha and according to it it is not sangari say so if you put no physical effort so if I was a monk is it true

well I don't think so I think it means any kind of effort it doesn't have to be physical effort for example

um to have an orgasm on purpose is the song God is a rule in question here and it is against the rules very much against the rules for a monk to have an orgasm on purpose

the deliberate emission of semen is
Sangha di sesa number one
requiring six days and six nights of
penance and like a long pain in the neck
reinstatement ceremony and so forth
ah and uh because it's an important rule
there's a lot of
um details on exactly what entails
breaking the rule
and
if a monk is making any kind of effort
to have an orgasm
then that's that's already against the
rule for example there's a case of
it's it's not against the rule if you
have like a wet dream like you have an
orgasm in your sleep

but if let's say you notice that you're more likely to have a wet dream if you sleep extra you know you sleep a few extra hours you get into the dreamy State and you're more likely to have wet dreams and then you you go to sleep deliberately in order to increase your odds of having a wet dream and then you have it you're guilty of breaking the rule because you have made an effort so I mean it wasn't really much physical effort you weren't touching yourself or anything but still it is an effort so using your mind to do it is I'm pretty sure that's against the rules also and uh just to uh

avoid going into a long detailed talk on
what doesn't does not entail Sangha DC
number one

and uh considering the large number of
questions this this show I think I'll
just move on to Mary's next question

and Mary says as I remember humble
stature and then in parentheses he says
why I always thought he was humble
statue

on on parentheses

wanted to come to South Carolina and
maybe start something with you a
meditation group or a cult I don't
remember anything in that department or
it has just died of natural causes
um yeah it is true

that humble stature

um which is not his real name

uh he started a group which I was

invited to join and I joined you know I

was game

it was called the spiritual right

and we got a website sort of going at

least the beginnings of it going and we

had some uh videos put out we had like a

YouTube channel and everything and then

he actually did move to South Carolina

he's uh here in town

but there were a few

um obstacles that were not overcome

one is he just could not make up his

mind he kept changing his plans which

started alienating members of the group
and um

he uh he eventually just kind of decided
against the whole thing

I guess I mean that's that was the last
I heard and um

so that was one thing also

um my girlfriend and he didn't get along
very well

um he was kind of uh

he'd go through phases of of like just

picking up chicks in bars and uh my

girlfriend didn't want me associating

with such a person

so

um yeah that kind of helped it to fizzle
out but it would have fizzled out anyway

I'm pretty sure because he just kept
changing his mind

and um really couldn't just settle on on
a course of action and just stick to it
so uh maybe uh

um he should work on more a ditana
parami or something more determination
just sticking this sticking to a plan
you know let's do this even if we do a
wrong common attitude

but he's he's doing fine you know he's
he's around

so I'll just move on to the next
question why Mary spelled m-e-r-r-y just
a side note what food if any can you
keep indefinitely well I assume this

question is referring to Buddhist
monastic discipline what food if any can
a monk keep indefinitely without
breaking any rules
and if it's kept as food then none I
mean a monk is not allowed to store food
more than one day if it's kept as food
but certain foods that have medicinal
properties can be kept for
as long as the monk wants like salt
garlic I think Ginger
um there's some medicinal kind of like
miral Bland fruits and that kind of a
thing
um those can be kept indefinitely so
long as they're not used for the monk to
eat now like if he's sprinkling the salt

on his food to make it taste better
that's against the rules but if he's
using the salt uh medicinally like maybe
like using it as toothpaste to brush his
teeth because he doesn't have access to
toothpaste something like that and that
would be okay or like a saline uh like a
laxative or something you can use salt
water as a laxative I guess the yogis do
that

so that would be all right so it would
depend on the intention of the use like
if it's used as food or to make food
taste better you know to improve the
enjoyment of food that kind of a thing
then no food can be kept more than one

day

it's

um but as I say there is a list of foods

like garlic and salt and uh there's

there's a number of other ones I think

Ginger like I said that uh they can be

kept indefinitely so long as it's purely

for medicinal use

so let's move on to the next question

this is from Fred

and this one is uh in response to the

video I did with uh Brian Rue on

channeling

and Fred says what's your thoughts on

containers for Spirits EG tree Spirit

houses

yeah or like temples or churches or

supposedly the house of God that kind of
a thing

um it may be that some lesser kind of
spirits you know hardly better than a
ghost might inhabit some Temple

dedicated to its honor or a shrine or
something but for the most part

um yeah like a temple to Athena is
wouldn't have Athena I mean assuming
even that Athena is is a real deity

um yeah I don't think she'd be living
there

um

I think that spirits that aren't
EarthBound

and yeah I mean they're not living on

this planet at all I mean they might
happen to come to a Temple dedicated to
their honor or a shrine dedicated to
their honor simply because people are
like invoking them there

but

um for example uh Jehovah I don't think
he really cares all that much about uh
churches any more than any other place
on this planet

so I mean for like some Earthbound deity
that's like relatively low level

possibly but for the most part

um it I don't think it works that way

and uh he has the term he uses is

containers for Spirits which is sort of
like it reminds me of uh

uh was it Ghostbusters you know they got
like the the cage thing the electronic
cage for catching Spirits yeah I don't
think those have been been invented yet
so I'll just move on to Fred's next
question can we reduce negative
sankara's yeah yeah we can reduce
negative Sun cards for those of you who
don't know what a songkara is Sankara is
one of the Vegas terms in the Pali
language

um it can mean anything has a beginning
and an end which means it can be
anything other than like nubana itself
um but here it's like mental States
especially volitional mental States like

Sankara Kanda is one of the five condas that compose a human being or one of the five Aggregates as it's called and Sankara in this case means like volitional mental States especially uh just will in general will

so can we reduce negative volitional mental States

um yeah yeah we can do that there's all different all different ways of doing it one is just living a moral simple peaceful life and then your mind just becomes more peaceful and then you're going to have less negative thoughts unless you're just chafing it living such a peaceful life you're just bored

as hell and then that can cause problems
on its own

um just replacing negative San Carlos
you know like you you notice you're
having negative thoughts about somebody
you can just replace that once you once
you catch it you can just start thinking
about something else

um

just just following dhamma in general
will tend to reduce the number of
negatives on cars it might also reduce
the number of positive ones but that's
kind of inevitable because there's
always kind of a balance going
positive and negative have to balance

out in the long run

so we'll just move on to the next

question this is from achala I think it

would be pronounced a-c-a-l-a I'm not

sure what language that is

maybe it's Polly so it would be

pronounced achala

and achala says what is the reason

behind mass of people dying due to

natural disasters like earthquakes in

the angura nikaya 870 there's a

discourse on earthquakes where Buddha

explains to Ananda eight reasons behind

earthquakes those reasons given in the

sutras are positive so why is something

positive should result in a negative

natural disaster is there something like

Collective comma

um well actually I think that suta in the angura nikaya is like an excerpt from the uh mahapari nibana suta which is uh the suit and the digani Kaya describing the Buddha's final days and he tells Ananda also in in natsuta that there are various causes for earthquakes and number one is that according to ancient Indian cosmology the the Earth is floating on water and the water is floating on air so that disturbances in the air causes disturbances in the water on which the Earth is floating which then causes the Earth to shake so that's not that's not

a positive one that was the only like
mechanistic explanation and all the rest
are just like prodigies you know like
um when the Buddha announces he's going
to die it causes the Earth to shake and
that's why the Earth Shook and that and
then he on the Buddha was telling anando
that the causes of earthquakes

um

so yeah that one is morally neutral it's
not really positive and those are
probably the ones that cause all the
death I don't think like a a Buddha
becoming enlightened is going to like
destroy a city
or some such
so that's that's part of the answer here

but um

um I think the main gist here is like
how can you know a million people or or
10 000 people all have the same Karma
that causes their City to be destroyed
by an earthquake and I was I was in a
medium-sized Town medium-sized for
Alaska anyway when I was a baby and uh
our the town of Seward Alaska was pretty
much wiped out by the big earthquake
there

um

it's I and I mean this this comes up a
lot and it is a good question you know
how if if we all have our individual
Karma and there is no group Karma as

Buddhism teaches then how is it that you know

large numbers of people you know like like the Bubonic plague or something can wipe out a third of the Earth's population or earthquake can just devastate a city or an entire area that kind of a thing

um you know how does that happen

and one of the main explanations is like of like Orthodox monks

is that although there is no individual

Karma or no group Karma I mean you know

it's like I mean it's sort of like the

the debate in evolution is you do groups

or do groups of animals evolve or is it

just a

is it just the individual

um

you know is is like natural selection

happening on groups I guess would be a

better way of putting it

um now according to Buddhism it's it's

entirely individual

but people with similar Karma with

similar stuff coming to them

um maybe reborn in into the same kind of

area of the same culture

so I mean that would be a substitute for

group Karma you know like just the the

endemic violence of the Middle East

since prehistoric times you know it's

probably one of the reasons why

civilization is said to have Arisen in
the in like

in the Middle East area is because it
was so violent that their people figured
out that if they had lived behind walls
they'd be safer

but um so that is one explanation is
just people have like the same sort of
karma will tend to be reborn into the
same kind of groups so that where the
you know the same kind of things will be
happening to them

and also

um I think it was

explained it this way once if I remember
correctly he was saying that we have so
much Karma that pretty much everybody

has some [_] hitting the fan Karma you know included in that and and then when the earthquake comes you know this just you have the seismic shift or whatever it just conveniently fits in with with that one

um you know we've got you know we've lived an infinite number of lives supposedly according to the according to the uh the doctrine or it's just you know innumerable innumerable

so that we made all kinds of Karma and it may be that uh pretty much everybody has some kind of [_] hitting the fan Karma that uh can be used up when the

[__] hits the fan in some area

um

so that's that's kind of like two or three answers coming from different directions to that question so I'll just move on to the next question this is from Austin

and Austin says can you share your understanding of the concept of chakras do Western monastics take this belief seriously I've heard that they are considered to be swirling centers of energy within the body which seems quite unusual to me well this isn't really uh a traditional Buddhist concept it's it's more

um comes from Hindu yoga

or you've got seven chakras and they're kind of along the spine like the the Kundalini you know as your Kundalini arises your chakras open they go higher and higher Ram Das used to talk about chakras a lot and literally means wheels you know it's just like an energy wheel or

um more like a like a energy ganglion or something

and ramdas said that the average person they've only got three chakras going that are still that aren't like dormant or just you know maybe just little twinges you know the the bass chakra is just survival

that's like um you know the base of the spine is I mean that's just you know food and and you know just avoiding danger staying warm comfortable that kind of a thing then above that is sex and then above that you get to the like the solar plexus or the the Don Tien I think some of the yoga people call it or Chinese medicine people and that's like power or status and then it just that's as far as most people get according to ramdas the next the next one that you hear the most about is the heart chakra which is compassion that's where you're just starting to get to the point where you realize you know you look at another

person you realize there's just another
me there you know it's just everyone is
is a different version of just me
and and it goes higher up until the
final chakras is like right at the crown
of the head and that's like the like the
enlightenment one that's even higher
than the the third eye chakra
foreign
as far as I'm concerned it's I don't
really think that uh
um a scientist would detect these
chakras otherwise modern medicine
probably would have detected them
already so I mean they're not anything
physical I think it might just be a kind

of gimmick like a theory that works you
know you've got the the different levels
of advancement in in human personality
or just in conscious just conscious
development

that um

uh you know you just sort of symbolize
them as chakras along the spine Channel
although of course practicing Yogi some
some Advanced Swami might say nope
they're for real and I've experienced
them directly

but um

yeah it's it's more of a Hindu concept
and uh Orthodox terravonna says
essentially nothing about it although I
guess there is a western monk who lives

in America somewhere

um who teaches she's like Incorporated

yoga and chakras and stuff into his

meditation instructions

um Brian Roo knows about him I don't

remember his name he's kind of an older

um American man I think

so I think that it's uh kind of a

gimmick I'm I'm skeptical of their

actual existence but it does kind of

help people to wrap their head around

Concepts and it may be useful

and um if you want to symbolize like

different stages in like mental

development or Spiritual Development as

you know energy centers going up the

spine I'm

um if it helps then that's fine

so I'll just move on to Austin's next question

and this one I'm not sure if he intended this one for the Q a although it was included with some other ones and it's are you open to engaging in Lively debate I believe that participating in discussions with other Faith systems would Foster meaningful dialogue and ultimately Aid in the dissemination and comprehension of Buddhist teachings if this interests you I'm sure the modern day debate channel would be honored to have you as a guest yeah I've I've considered that I mean we watched my my

sweetheart and I watched some of those
modern day debates

um the two main debates going on it
seems like the two main themes are one
are theists versus atheists and two is
flat earthers versus round earthers that
you can have like a four hour long
debate on that channel over whether the
Earth is flat or round and then like a
week or two later there'll be another
one they just it's like uh inexhaustible
Gold Mine of
this back and forth they do have some
pretty inept Debaters I think I would
I'd I would do well on that on that
channel I think

um but yeah I'm I'm open for debate I mean there's there's a few things I couldn't debate well I mean I obviously I could debate Buddhism I could debate the whole atheism issue fairly well although that one's being done to death on the channel

um something like Evolution but I mean they've got evolutionary biologists who go on the show so they would probably be able to do it better than I do unless they're just crappy debaters

no there yeah there are things like religion or spirituality in general or meditation things like that

I think I could hold my own against like the materialistic atheist fairly well

but I'm not sure I mean what I just like
contact them and say Hey I want to
debate somebody and tell them who I am
and what I specialize in that kind of a
thing yeah maybe

someone wants to uh sign me up I won't I
won't mind

so I'll just move on to Austin's next
question

and this one is this one's a good one
this is an interesting one I don't know
if I'll be able to answer it very well
but it's it's a fairly good one
can you present a logically sound
argument for Buddhism or is the nature
of Buddhism inherently an understandable

because using words to Oh inherently not understandable because using words to conceptualize reality is unfeasible well there are different aspects of Buddhism and you could logically give logical sound arguments to various aspects of Buddhism certain aspects of Buddhism yeah I don't think they would really hold up to intense scrutiny because but those are really not the essential ones you know like some of the mythology some of the Legends um a lot of abidama philosophy I mean if you're again if you're debating this I think it'd be hard to really defend the position well against an

intelligent

skeptic who debates well

but just like some of the basic ideas of
Buddhism like

um just striving for nibana where

I mean you can put that in terms of like

Emmanuel Kant in Western philosophy who

said that there are two truths and

seriously just like Buddhism teaches

that there are two truths you've got

ultimate truth and you've got like

conventional truth or what Kant called

the thing in itself and the thing as it

seems or just the phenomenon the

phenomenon and the noumenon something

like that

and Kant said that you just cannot know reality all you can know is just your mental constructs you know just the symbols cooked up by your mind in accordance with these categories and so forth but in Buddhism I think that Buddhism originally was a kind of systematic technique for understanding Ultimate Reality and there's one Ultimate Reality that we can know directly and that is the Ultimate Reality of our own consciousness

so

Buddhism

um you could argue I could argue that Buddhism began as a kind of systematic method for cultivating what could be called mysticism or just

knowing Consciousness directly without
the intermediary of symbolic perceptions
another another thing that's fairly
logical is that

um

in Buddhism they're teaching The
Liberation from suffering and
our how to liberate yourself from
suffering

and the way you do that if if you could
put forth a logical case that good and
bad positive and negative have to
balance out in the long run and so
what a monk is doing he's just trying to
go for just clear neutrality
so I mean that's fairly logical you know

you avoid

unpleasant things and you avoid Pleasant
ones also that's that's kind of like the
middle path

you know the middle path is the path
between seeking out pleasure and seeking
out pain you just kind of

you know right down the middle

and then you're in a state of equanimity

and Clarity of mind you're not all like

liking this disliking that getting all

distracted you know pitting yourself

against reality and then it's more

you're more

it's easier to penetrate the illusion

and experience Ultimate Reality directly

that way also

some parts are more difficult than

others to uh

give logically sound Arguments for but

um oh

it seems to me like the basics

um are pretty sound you know the the

first three of the four noble truths for

example are just pretty solid logic

but I think I'll just move on to the

next question

this is also from Austin

and he says

as someone who subscribes to the core

teachings of the Eightfold Path non-self

in the Buddha's Enlightenment but holds

a different perspective on certain

Legends and tales should I still
consider myself a Buddhist well welcome
to the club I'm in the same I'm in the
same Club there even when I was a monk
like a junior Monk still I think I would
I would fit the description here of
someone who subscribes to the core
teachings of the Eightfold Path non-self
and the Buddha's Enlightenment
Etc beholds a different perspective on
certain Legends and tales yeah like
talking animal stories or like I already
mentioned like the Earth floating on
water which then floats on air that kind
of a thing
um it's it's irrelevant really
to to what dhamma is essentially about

it's it's like in ancient Indian culture
so I might not be an orthodox terravonna
Buddhist in Austin might not be an
orthodox terabonda Buddhist but
um I think we come a lot closer to the
essence of Buddhism than some people who
are considering themselves to be
authorities on Buddhism or just devout
Buddhists
so yeah no worries there now I'll just
move on to uh
Austin's last question here
did you become a happier person after
you entered monkhood and that's that's a
good question too
um it's weird it's it's kind of a trick

question because when I was a junior monk or let's just back up a little before I became a monk you know I was I was starting to worry you know I was in my late 20s kind of a rascal and I was kind of worried that I mean if there is such a thing as hell I might I might wind up going there

I wasn't really an evil person but I was uh

I wasn't particularly moral from a Buddhist point of view

and I just thought well if I become a monk then I'll be joining the ranks of these men dedicated to Enlightenment and all of them will be wiser than me because they've been striving harder

than me you know and then I I entered
this Asian Monastery and you get this
harsh Awakening

to the to the fact that most Asian monks
maybe most western monks but certainly
most Asian ones aren't even trying
really

you know they might be like a a Buddhist
light person who's just trying to get
enough Merit to get a better rebirth but
they're not striving for enlightenment
they're not really doing much to
cultivate wisdom a lot of them don't
bother to meditate or follow the rules
you know they're just like priests that
do the ceremonies and do the chanting

and bless people and

um they're like masters of Ceremonies

for

the lay people that like the ceremonies

so I was like very disillusioned and

sullen

for for quite a while I remember I was

trying to come up with one word to

describe each person of the monastery

and the word I came up with my for

myself was sullen

but on the other hand when you when you

enter the monk Hood it's like life gets

much simpler more peaceful

and it might not be happier necessarily

but it's it's less unhappy because as I

was already saying like happy and

unhappy I have to balance out
so from like a
a Buddhist point of view
the the truest happiness is just kind of
a neutrality just equanimity
and um yeah I had I had more of that I
had more clarity uh at least in phases
but there were times as a monk I mean
it's you're just like hitting a wall
you're just in a state of despair and
Desperation I mean that happened a lot
too
um I was talking at the very beginning
about how my Consciousness expands and
contracts and probably the worst I was
ever depressed in my life was

um as a monk living in a big school

Monastery in your Mandalay I mean that

was that was awful I was almost I was

almost incapacitated just I was just so

contracted down and just dry and you

know dry of spirit

so

yeah I think a monk who is good at being

a monk and being among fits him he will

be more content more Serene and that was

generally my situation

um

most of the time especially after I

started you know going off and living in

the forest alone

where I wasn't having to participate in

sort of Asian

um traditional Buddhism so much and just
go out in the woods and just chill

but I mean even that I mean

um just celibacy can be a strain or just
being alone can be a strain not being

able to stop sweating in tropical

climates I mean things can just get to

you

so

yeah I'm I'm kind of skeptical as to the
whole idea of being happier or unhappier

overall unless it's just you know more

equanimous or less equanimous

and as a layperson I've sort of adopted

the whole stoic idea of you just have to

accept the ups and the Downs you know

it's like you're you're making more
karma you're going to have more good and
more bad happening to you probably just
going with Statistics or whatever and so
you just have to like try to to surf the
waves better

and uh so it's more happy and more
unhappy I guess as a layperson

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Ethel sieg I think
is how it's pronounced

Ethel psych ethyl sieg something like
that

a-e-t-h-e-l-s-i-g-e which sounds Old
English

and Ethel seeks first question here
and this is this is another one that

comes up this is this is a tough
question

I think I'm right in saying that
memories are not part of the karmic
momentum carried forward in rebirth but
some people quite often children seem to
be able to recall details of past lives
in quite some detail do you believe in
past life memories and if so how is this
explained in Buddhist philosophy you
know why can't everyone remember their
previous lives

okay there's there's a little bit to
kind of deconstruct here if you'll
forgive me using that term

um

memories are not part of the karmic momentum in a way they are I mean just going with hardcore abidama I've I've asked about this hobbydama Scholars you know I've consulted I'll be dominant Scholars on this and they said every single thing that arises in your in your mind or your body every like sensation or thought that arises is kamoipaka it's the fruition of karma so from that point of view Memory would would have a car would have a karmic element to say the least

um

but as he says I mean we don't remember our past lives and that's

I mean just going with I mean one answer

I've given to that one person asked me why don't we remember our past lives is because we got a different brain but that's really not a good Buddhist answer um I have read a couple books by Ian Stevenson about children who remember past lives and my father also claimed to remember some of his past lives um he remembered uh just details of at least four or five past lives and um in his case and he remembered them through hypnotic regression it wasn't through meditation or you know going into deep meditative States unless you know being in a deep hypnotic trance could be considered something similar

um

the children I mean in the books the children who remembered details of their past lives were often just I mean they got it right you know they seem to remember it quite clearly some of it and then as they get older they would just stop identifying with that life and just start identifying more with the body that they were in so I guess some children when they're first born you know they still have they're not really fully identified with the new life yet and so they're still getting a lot of bleed through from the previous one uh I do think that it's possible I don't think that everyone who claims to

remember past lives is necessarily
remembering past lives I mean in a
hypnotic trance you're told that you're
going to remember past lives you'll just
cook something up just that you would
expect you know and uh a lot of people
who presumably know their past lives
they all they're all like famous and
that kind of a thing

um

yeah why can't everyone remember their
past lives I think we it's just a matter
of forgetting

so let's see here

yeah I'll just I'll just move on to the
next question that is that is a tough

question though

this is Ethel sieg's second and last

question here

what's the correct or the best way of

doing walking meditation I had seen

videos where people are doing it really

really slowly whereas others seem to be

walking quite quickly and when you're

doing walking meditation What

specifically should you'd be one

wouldn't we should wouldn't be mindful

of

well there's different ways of doing

walking meditation just as there's

different ways of doing sitting

meditation like the mahasi method you're

going in slow motion and usually for

beginners you're just being mindful of the lifting of the foot and the the putting down of the foot or the lifting of the foot and then the moving forwards of the foot and the putting down of the foot and the lifting of the other foot and then moving forwards and the putting down and um

an even simpler way than not just counting you counting steps you know one two three four five one two three four five six up to one two three four five six seven eight nine ten and then back to five and I mean there's there's just different ways of doing it um the way I have done it when I was

doing walking meditation

is I mean you're just mindful of

whatever sensation is the most obvious

for me it was generally like my feet

touching the ground or a lot of the time

there'd be like this oily slippery

sensation in my knee joint so my legs

would swing that

um for some reason it was easy for me to

just rest my my mindful concentration on

that

so whatever is is most obvious like if

you get you got your eyes open it's

pretty much have to do when you're doing

walking meditation even seeing you know

just uh sometimes at night in Burma I do

walking meditation

um just looking straight forwards and
just not focusing your you know not like
focusing on anything in particular you
just have like the wide open gaze of
like a camera or something a mirror
and just do it that way just use the the
seeing mindfulness I'm seeing although
since you're walking usually one of the
most

um

noticeable things to to attend to is
just the whatever's going on in your
legs and your feet you know whatever
Sensations are most noticeable there
and then you can you can do it you know
all the time it's not just walking back

and forth in a special
you know special covered walkway I mean
you can be going up and down stairs or
just walking at work or or whatever and
you can be doing walking meditation so
long as you're being mindful of the
process or of anything really is even
seeing I mean you don't even have to be
uh mindful of of the legs moving
although you want to take in as much as
you can you know you want it as wide of
a of a scope as possible without
necessarily focusing on one thing in
particular
but I think I'll get back to that a
little bit with regard to sitting
meditation

but uh I'll just move on to the next
question here

and this is from Johannes

I believe that is

how to pronounce his name Johannes

and Johannes says

the main Foundation is the knowing of

long and short in and out breaths is

there any chance that digam assassami

and

rasami or I breathe in long and I

breathe in short in the English

translation of the poly words can be

translated as abdominal breathing and

thoracic breathing it always baffled me

that short and long in this case should

refer to a temporal aspect of the in and out breathing

it seems in the context of the anapana city sutta

that the two terms are way more defined than just temporal length or shortness

since there is no way to say that an in-breath

is absolutely long or short time wise

it's very vague to assume that this is meant no

I'm never now it's a part of the

questionnaires is no question mark

it's not like I'm saying no to that

I continue I never got how the knowledge about the temporal length of an

in-breath should develop mindfulness on

the whole body Saba Kaya patissa

in Bali when the normal instructions for developing mindfulness on the body are to develop mindfulness on the spatial movements and positions of the body well

I don't think that breathing in Long means abdominal breathing and breathing in short means thoracic breathing but it could just mean like I mean I've I've noticed this too I don't think it was very

um the best way of instructing on mindfulness it's just like you know the quality of the breath you know you know if you're breathing deep or if you're breathing shallow taking long slow

breaths a short fast breaths I think
that's the the point of it is you just
you're watching the breathing and you
know you're knowing what you're doing in
your breathing you know if you're
breathing you know shallow you know if
you're breathing deep you know if you're
breathing

um you know quickly or slowly that kind
of a thing

I think that's that's the main point of
it but yeah I do not see that it's
referring to abdominal or thoracic
breasts

but really I mean if if when I'm doing
breathing meditation

I mean mainly just watching the

sensation of touch of the nostrils or at least that's that's the way I would do it

and look except for when I was at uh mahasi Center and they make you do the the belly stuff

so yeah it's just too much thinking I like if you're dividing it up into I am breathing long or I am breathing short and just like that man it's just way too much of thinking

and it kind of uh it lowers the quality of the meditation so you just be aware of it I mean just watch it and that's good enough

so the next question from Johannes

is do you have any experience with
working out while living a dominant life
in the biku Bunga in the story about
daba the seven year old arahant it is
said that there were some monks engaging
too much in physical exercise I don't
know the the poly original but I was
wondering if maybe you knew some
polytext discussing the topic and if you
have some experience with it well
physical exercise
is not encouraged
in uh
in the the rules of monastic discipline
um just for health like for for health
just walking a lot is the usual exercise
that a mom gets that and just the

standard

um you know chop would carry water kind of stuff just the living the life of a forest monk generally involves enough exercise to keep you healthy and that's the whole point is you're supposed to be healthy for the sake of practicing dhamma

um

trying to beautify yourself trying to be buff or ripped or whatever whatever the term is

um yeah that's definitely out no kind of beautification you're not even supposed to eat food for the sake of beautification you're not supposed to do

anything for the sake of beautification
of your body

um

so yeah doing doing like calisthenics or
even something like Tai Chi could be
borderline because that's kind of
meditative you could sort of do that as
a meditation but like swimming for
exercise

um yeah working lifting weights and
stuff yeah that would be out I'm pretty
sure unless it was like you have a
doctor telling you that I mean you're
you gotta do these exercises you know
like stretches or something maybe you've
got like plantar fasciitis in your foot
or something you got some kind of tendon

problem or something and you need to do stretches and some kind of exercises to repair that or fix that then that would be okay but yeah just uh like the modern or in modern western or even like the the classical Greek love for gymnastics and exercise and that kind of a thing it's uh is pretty much alien to um

to tear upon a Buddhist monasticism

I mean you just have to be just healthy enough to practice and that's good to know so let's just move on to johannes's next question

and that is did the Buddha practice the noble Eightfold Path if yes when did he

exactly start to practice it if no is it really so absurd to assume that there are two ways to Enlightenment well this is this is kind of a trickier question than I thought because

um

apparently I mean he wasn't practicing the noble Eightfold Path perfectly up until just very shortly before it became enlightened because he was doing the austerities you know just like torturing himself which was not you know like right conduct

um

but yeah I mean he he practiced the noble Eightfold Path I assume I mean just assuming that the whole Noble

Eightfold Path is not an anachronism
there there is some evidence that the
Eightfold nature of the path not the not
the idea of the path itself not
magasacha itself but dividing it up into
eight factors that could be a later
development

um not very much later but still it is
like there are some uh ten there's at
least a few sutos teaching a tenfold
path

um

I think white Liberation is is one of
the the extra ones but um
let's see if no is it really so absurd
to us and there are two ways to

Enlighten them well

he had a lot of part of me he was

practicing you know all the right things

at different times probably and gotten

better and better at it so he was very

close it may be that you just cannot

practice the noble evil path perfectly

until you are perfect

you know if you're fully enlightened

then it you know you're able to practice

it perfectly

but you do the best you can and that's

that's kind of what the path is about

it's not just standing in one place it's

you know it's there's a certain process

to it and you tend to get better and

better at it

so

but again like the whole Eightfold

nature of the path

um maybe a later Edition

so I'll just uh

man it's like I feel like there's

probably more I should say about this

but I can't think of what it would be

did the Buddha practice an oblateful

path if yes when did he exactly start to

practice it if no is it really so absurd

to assume that there are two ways to

enlightenment

um

yeah well it's sort of like anguli Mala

is a good example who is a serial killer

on Google Maul literally means a Garland of fingers because he would uh cut off a finger of each of his victims and he was making this big necklace out of it and uh he tried to kill the Buddha and uh the Buddha converted him and then um I guess he started following the full path after after that and he didn't do it for very long he became enlightened after that

I mean after he after he became a monk you know he was he he got converted by the Buddha after trying to kill him after trying to kill him then he he was ordained as a monk and practiced and presumably he was following a bladed path before he became enlightened

so with the Buddha though it's um he was probably doing some of them really well and then sort of going off the track a little bit with like with the self-torture stuff for a while and then he just kind of snapped back into place and got it all right and became enlightened

that is my gas so I'll just move on to the next question from yuanus

does the poly Canon specify that there is only one bodhisattva at a time no I don't think so I think there's lots of bodhisattvas which is weird because you'd think that they're

um you know there'd be a limited number

I've there are so many bodhisattvas in
our bodhisattas in terrar Buddhism it's
just in Burma a lot of like the the
founder of the tradition which I was
ordained Tom Poole he considered himself
to be a bodhisatta

um

so there's lots of bodhisattas and once
you become a bodhisatta then there's you
know the zillion gajillion years of
perfecting all of the parmies

so

yeah so there are there are a lot it's
just the next there's only going to be
one next Buddha and so the dot
bodhisatta is supposedly in what to see
to Heaven I think supposedly waiting

until it's his time to come down is

Mateo Buddha or maitrea in Sanskrit

but yeah the easy answer to that

question is um no there's not just one

bodhisatta at a time

so Johanna says next question

where does it say that Pacheco Buddhas

only arise when the teaching of the

Buddha is not in the world if Buddha

said

that his true teaching would be gone

after 500 years doesn't this mean that a

lot of Mystics

from the different religions could be

Pacheco Buddhas

um I'm not exactly where it originally

says you know like the the authoritative
statement in the text that Pacheco
Buddha's only arise when there is not a
Buddha in the world

um that could be a later development
maybe the whole idea of Pacheco Buddhas
could be a later development but it is
orthodox tradition and a lot of books
that are composed later you know 20th
century books will assert
when discussing this that apacheco
Buddha

um they only arise
at times when there is no Buddhism
so it's not
yeah it's when the Buddha sasana is
extinct in this world then you've got

these hermit Buddhas pacheca is like for
one self Buddhas this is kind of what
pacheca means it's like for oneself he's
just he's fully enlightened he's better
he's higher up than just an ordinary
Aura hot you know he's gotten the the
omniscience of a Buddha and so forth but
um he just

opt to be a Hermit and not teach like
according to tradition go to My Buddha
our our Buddha almost became a Pacheco
Buddha because he figured nobody would
understand dependent co-arising
so

um yeah I don't know that's the first
question there's I don't I don't know

where the the oldest statement is that
Pacheco Buddhas only arise from the
teaching the Buddha is not in the world
but then there's this next question here
that's part of that question if the
Buddha said that his true teaching would
be gone after 500 years doesn't this
mean that a lot of Mystics from the
different religions could be Pacheco
Buddhas

um yeah if you had fully enlightened
beings after Buddhism has died out and
if you assume that Buddhism has died out
and what's passing for Buddhism now is
is like a forgery that is not authentic
Buddhism then it's possible but they
wouldn't be teaching see that's the

thing if if you've got Mystics from
different religions that are promoting
their system then they wouldn't be
particular Buddhists because they're not
Hermits living out in the forest cave
somewhere

but

um although Buddhism is wise enough
that it doesn't insist that only
Buddhists can go to heaven

you know any good person of just about
any spiritual or religious system can go
to heaven if they make enough Merit you
know if they do more good than bad
but um theravada Buddhism still has
claims pretty much of a monopoly on

enlightenment

there are although members of other religions can go to heaven only a good terrible Buddhism who practices correctly uh only a good terrible Buddhist who practices correctly can become fully enlightened and attained Nirvana

um unless you're a Pacheco Buddha that is just like a an outlier almost like an anomaly

and then they they're not for some reason they just don't teach

but I'm rather skeptical of the whole idea I think uh Hindus can become in line I would not be surprised if there

have been more enlightened Hindus than
enlightened tarabana Buddhists they're
probably been enlightened in Mahayana
Buddhists I wouldn't be surprised if
there's even been some enlightened
Christians Saint John of the Cross would
be a good

um

a good candidate for that maybe Meister
Eckhart

so

yeah so I'm just kind of skeptical about
the whole idea of

um you know only only a Buddhist can
possibly become enlightened

so I'll just move on to johannes's next

and last question here

and that is what is Sati panya is it

comparable to Buddha nature

literally is mindfulness

and wisdom or at least going with the

usual translations of Sadi and panya

you know it's uh

memory

understanding

or something yeah it's essentially like

the wisdom of the wisdom of of

mindfulness

essentially

and is it comparable to Buddha nature

uh that's a that's a tough one Buddha

nature itself is a Mahayana term

and it seems to me that Buddha nature is

just like an awareness of the absolute
you know deep down you still have this
awareness of the absolute you know
that's your Buddha nature
um and then of course one of the most
well-known Zen Koons is you know Among
Us Joshua does a dog have Buddha nature
and Joshua said moo which in Chinese the
original Chinese would be Woo which I
mean maybe he was just barking like a
dog instead of saying no because we
meant no or but I mean he wasn't saying
that a dog doesn't have Buddha nature he
was just sort of saying you know don't
even don't even go there
but um that's not the question here

um

yeah I mean there could be some overlap

I suppose if if you consider the Buddha

nature just to be like this the deep

down awareness of the absolute of the

highest truth

that

um

then you should really cherish you

should cultivate that

and Sadiq panya may be a way of

cultivating it but I don't think it's

exactly the same

so we'll just move on to the next

question this is from Andreas

and this question comes up every every

few episodes here

um in in some form or another

Andrea says what are your thoughts on
semen retention brahmacharya or celibacy

I recently noticed huge benefits but
after some time those turn into the
opposite like lethargy and obsessive
thoughts and desires any tips on
overcoming those downsides

so

yeah I think I'd be more inclined to
address celibacy than semen retention
because

um if you're young and still got a lot
of Vitality then you're still not going
to be retaining your semen because at
least in my case I was averaging like a

wet dream every couple weeks I think my
record was three and three nights
so I mean it's still I mean if you build
up too much pressure it's going to have
to give
but uh celibacy
it does have its benefits
um some of them are just kind of
superficial outward benefits of you know
like you know you're not involved in a
relationship that can
have such ups and downs and distractions
and pleasures and displeasures and all
that you just kind of get lost in some
sorrow that way I think that's one of
the main benefits of celibacy is uh
um

it just kind of helps you to avoid the extremes and it's more of a middle pass kind of approach but I mean it's not for everybody it's it's even the New Testament like in Jesus of Nazareth in the New Testament it says there are three kinds of eunuchs in this world there's those that are born eunuchs those who are made eunuchs and those who are eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven and that's people who are celibate for Spiritual reasons and then he says but it's not for everybody and it's not because I mean some people are just

is it's horny and frustrated all the

time

I can relate to that

so with regard to making celibacy easier
two of the traditional Buddhist ways are
just don't eat very much and don't sleep
very much

and when you're like

malnourished and and sleepy you're less
likely to be horny

um

yeah I mean you want to kind of keep the
life force kind of burning low if you if
you're celibate you know like in in
Hinduism I mean you wouldn't want to be
eating a lot of rajasic foods you know
eating lots of meat and spicy foods that
tend to up the libido kind of a thing

soy maybe I don't know I shouldn't I
shouldn't encourage that

um

yeah so just I mean if you're living a a
clean life

then uh you just try both ways and see
which way it works better I guess

um or just anything is going to have
downsides I mean the last part here any
tips on overcoming these downsides aside
from just uh you know eating less and
sleeping less so that your your fire is
burning lower and less likely to you
know erupt in a volcano

um yes to some degree it's just
mindfulness you know it's like you just

observe the uh

the the negative effects or whatever or

just observe what's going on and just uh

endure it with Equanimity if possible

okay but I will say that just like

visualizing rotting female corpses and

that sort of thing it doesn't work

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from rui and rui says

oh this is a good question too by the

way

rui says salutations Ponyo were you

practicing a specific meditation during

that period that you call my best

meditation

so uh I guess yeah yeah I was practicing

a specific meditation I suppose I called

it fourth gear

um when I was doing intensive practice I had I had four gears that were worked out just through trial and error what worked and what didn't work and so forth first gear was just like desperation mode where you know it's like your mind is just so all over the place and distracted and Restless that you can't really uh get into any deep meditation my primary object would be the pressure of my two thumbs pressing together in my lap which is kind of a good uh primary object because you can adjust it you know if it's the pressure is getting too much then you can just lighten up and if

the pressure is not enough to notice
easily you just push your thumbs
together a little harder and then aside
from that I would label everything
except for breathing uh
see breathing hearing and swallowing my
own slobber I think those are the three
things that I wouldn't have to know I
mean you have to like be aware of it but
you wouldn't label it you just label
everything else you know like itching or
or you know wondering about something
you know what was that sound just
wondering remembering you know
pain stretching pressure just just
anything else that that arose as the as
a distraction from the primary object in

the in the the primary object would just
be touching just touching touching
touching that was that was first gear
second gear was on a palm
where you're just observing the the
sensation of of touch
at or around the nostrils
and I wouldn't be labeling it but I
would label anything else except for
um hearing and swallowing my slobber and
then a third gear
was like you're pretending like your
mind is hooked up to a loudspeaker and
you're like in a library or something
with this big scary librarian lady and
every time you start thinking it's

Blaster with a loudspeaker and the big scary librarian lady starts giving you dirty looks and you're gonna get in trouble so you're just trying to keep your mind quiet you're just observing your mind very carefully and then if a thought starts to arise you just try and stop it that would be third gear and then fourth gear is it's almost effortless it's like you get into this state where you're just wide open your mind is just clear and I don't know if you can say it was empty or not but it's like just clear like glass and you're very mindful at the time so that if a thought starts to arise

it's sort of like a fish starting to
arise the surface of a pond you start
seeing the ripples

before the fish even gets all the way to
the top and then you just immediately
become aware of that and then it just
flattens back out to a flat comb again
and that was the kind of meditation that
I was doing where you're just sitting
there essentially empty just your your
mind is just silent and clear like glass
so that was I was able to do that on a
daily basis for months

when I was had my best my best the best
meditation in my life at least at least
for a while I mean it wouldn't be all

day long

but I was I was able to get to that

level fairly well

um

for a considerable period of time every

day for months although I never fully

mastered it

so I'll just move on to the next

question

and this is from Conrad this is sort of

a multi-part question about precepts

and Conrad says Ponoyo basa I have a

question about the Buddhist precepts I

watched one of your videos from a while

ago where you explain how a lot of the

things we regard as Buddha's essential

teachings were essentially or were

actually inserted in later so firstly
did the Buddha actually invent the five
precepts for laypeople or are they a
later addition well actually it's
neither because the five precepts in
some form or another existed before the
time of the Buddha he just adopted it as
just sort of the standard for the
supporters of a monastic group like the
the Jains had their own version of the
five precepts the only the Fifth Fifth
precept differed and I think the
supporters of like the
the the forest dwelling brahmins the
proto-hindus
um they also had five precepts

and uh so it was just like Indian
tradition

that the monks would have you know an
elaborate set of precepts but that the
lay people who supported the monks would
only have five or I mean a minimum of
five they could take extra ones as as
optional

so I think with the James it was the
fifth precept was like owning private
property or something and apparently
were rather communistic

put in uh in Buddhism it's it's uh
mainly on taking intoxicants which cause
heatlessness or cloudiness of mind
so

yeah it was just sort of a modification

of an already existing system the five precepts so that goes probably way back so I'll just move on to Conrad's next question on precepts here on the first precept is it ever Justified to take life without it being bad karma for example in self-defense or premeditated taking of life for just purposes such as nourishing oneself by fishing or the state executing of a murderer as a method of Retribution for his deed the only way that you take a life without without it being bad karma that's a general rule they may be weird exceptions but as a general the only way to kill a living being without making

bad karma is if you do it completely
undeliberately

you know it's you're not doing it on
purpose you know you have no intention
to kill the thing but you know you just
step on an ant while you're walking
something like that

uh self-defense it's still considered to
be bad karma I mean if you're lashing
out in self which even uh even a monk is
allowed to strike out in self-defense
and you accidentally kill the guy then
maybe

you know you haven't made Bad Karma for
killing him if if you're just trying to
get away or just trying to fend off his
blows and you wind up accidentally you

know dealing a mortal blow to him

yourself

but uh like hunting and fishing now um

even even self-defense

um if you're like a pure enlightened

Sage supposedly according to terrible to

Buddhism

you just let yourself get killed if you

couldn't run away I mean you wouldn't

fight back

you know you turn the other cheek and or

no you wouldn't even do that you just

just let yourself get killed and

executing murderers now there's there's

even a

there's even a us a little story in the

text with regard to the

murder like that's harajika number two

right

now particular number three the third

party if you commit murder you're

excommunicated for life you're no longer

a monk you can never be ordained again

and um

there was one monk who was advising the

state executioner that he should keep

his acts sharpened and try to finish off

the victim with one blow

just and and the monk was just trying to

be compassionate you know he didn't want

the the murderer you know even though he

was a murderer or you know some somebody

worthy of the death penalty found worthy

of the death penalty you know he just he
didn't want him to have like this gnarly
desk where it takes like five or six
chops to get to get him get his head off
so he was just being compassionate you
know just keep the ax well sharpened try
and finish it with one blow and um
oh just a second

I just had an alert saying the battery
on this computer is almost dead because
I forgot to plug it in

okay we're good

so anyway

um he was you know when the Executioner
followed his advice that monk was uh a
uh an accessory to murder he was guilty

of the paragica offense just just even
though he was motivated more by
compassion

still I mean if you deliberately take a
life

then uh yeah you're still getting the
karma for it I mean is the karma varies
I mean

um you know if you're trying to kill
someone compassion if you're trying to
kill not some someone necessarily even
an animal if you're trying to do it
humanely you know like you're you're
hunting and you just shoot it right
through the head with one shot and
that's it I mean that's going to be
better than uh you know bow hunting and

just letting it bleed out while you're
tracking it for three days
that kind of a thing
so I mean there there are levels of of
Badness of of killing deliberate killing
but there's always at least a little bit
of Badness involved so that a saint just
wouldn't kill anything supposedly
according to the decks like there is one
story in Louis City Maga about some
araha or maybe he wasn't even an armhan
yet he was this monk who lived in the
forest and he got tied up with living
Vines by some robbers who stole what
literally had and then just left him
there and then they like tipped over a

oil lamp or something and caught Forest on fire and so the forest is burning but he won't break the vines because they're still alive they're still living plants and he let himself just burn to death and I think he became enlightened while he was burning to death

that's how extreme Buddhist ethics are only uh just about a monastic Saint or Sage

can really be fully moral you know

there's almost everything we do has got at least a little bit of Bad Karma mixed envelope

so I'll just move on to Conrad's next question

is it ever justifiable to break any of

the other four

precepts under certain circumstances

stealing false speech sensual misconduct

intoxication

um if you do it on purpose there's

always going to be a certain amount of

demerit involved or Bad Karma

akusala Kama

um but I mean there may be cases in

which

it may be justified to you you may you

may be you may think that breaking the

rule is less immoral than keeping the

rule for example I've told this story

before there's a famous story called The

Fourth wise man I can't remember the

author it's a famous short story about
he's this wise man in Persia he sees the
Star of Bethlehem so he's going to go
with the other Magi to go and worship
the baby Jesus following the star but
he's got some kind of complications you
know he's going to meet up with them you
know they go on ahead
and he just keeps getting sidetracked
because he's like he's like having to
help people and he's like giving away
the treasure that he was going to give
to the baby Jesus because they need it
so bad so anyway he gets to Jerusalem
and there he got King Herod has ordered
the death of all the the baby boys and
he's just staying in this house where

there's a woman with a baby boy and
she's just terrified so he's just you
know he has compassion says don't worry
and he stands at the doorway and when
the the soldiers of King Herod come
pounding on the door he gives a little
bit of the treasure he was going to give
to the baby Jesus you know it's like
this big pearl or something and he he
looks the soldier in the eye says
there's no babies here and the soldier
looks at this treasure that he's getting
and he just waves the soldiers on you
know there's no babies here let's keep
going so the guy lied but of course the
mother is on her knees just just crying

in in just joy and gratitude you know
obviously

I You could argue

he did better by telling the LIE than
letting the the Woman's baby get
butchered

so I mean there's there's all kinds of
possibilities here and you're gonna have
to judge you know choose the lesser of
two evils because five precepts it's
just sort of a guideline it's just
purely superficial Buddhist ethics are
not with regard to bodily actions nearly
so much as they are with Garden mental
States what determines the karmic value
of an action is the mental States
accompanying the action you know the

volition or the will and not just the physical action itself two people can do exactly the same physical action one is doing good and the other one is doing bad or one is doing more good than bad and the other one is doing vice versa so there may be times when it may seem like the lesser of two evils and that's a choice that you have to make individually although uh as a general rule you're still going to be making that at least a little bit of Bad Karma just pure good karma is is a pretty much of a myth so Conrad's next question regarding precepts here

furthermore what is defined as sensual misconduct I understand that being adulterous is immoral but how about premarital sex with a committed partner is all sex between consenting adults who are not using deception or trickery or engaging in adultery regarded as moral so one might so one night stands are moral well

mainly

um sensual misconduct would be adultery
um like if you're married and you're messing around with somebody else or you're messing around with somebody else who is married also just promiscuous sex that's just for the sake of pleasure that's out so one night stands would not

be moral hiring a prostitute would not
be moral and then there's like a a list
of like forbidden females and it's any
woman who's already under the
patriarchy of a man or the the
guardianship you know like like the
woman who already has a husband you know
she's under the protection or the
guardianship of her husband a girl still
living with her her parents
regardless of how old she is
I mean she's like already under the
guardianship of a man like another guy's
slave a female prisoner
she's like under the guardianship of the
prison guards or whatever so it's like

the only woman that you can have sex
with and have it be
um like not be essential misconduct is I
mean if she's not already spoken for
and if if you generally love her I mean
if you have genuine feelings for
I mean if you're married to her then I
guess theoretically you could have sex
with her without loving her or something
maybe just for the sake of having babies
or something but

um

yeah it's

mainly

um you don't have to be married like in
terrible like the ancient Ganges Valley
was a little bit more advanced than some

later cultures uh in with regard to a lot of things and yeah it's you don't have like fornication is not necessarily immoral unless it's just you know the one night stand is just like

um

just uh promiscuous sex promiscuous sex

is is not moral but if it's with

somebody that you're committed to you

know you're together

you're committed to each other then yeah

that's not necessarily uh immoral from

from a lay person's point of view

I mean all sex I mean we'll get to that

in this next question here also from

comrade is homosexual homosexuality

regarded as immoral

um

pretty much all sexuality is regarded as immoral to some degree you know because it's desire is the cause of all suffering and sex involves desire and lust and you know lust is one of the the three poisons and uh

so yeah homosexuality is regarded as immoral heterosexuality also is kind of seen as sort of like a necessary evil for laypeople or maybe a necessary pleasure for laypeople

um but the whole concept of

homosexuality it it's arguable that it didn't really exist in ancient times

um like I've said more than once like in

ancient Rome

um there was no real concept of

homosexuality is it was your masculine

or effeminate and that depending on

whether you are on top or on bottom

but even even a man like performing

cunnilingus on a woman that would be

considered almost as bad because you

know you had to be on top you're the one

who was receiving the pleasure not the

one who was giving it necessarily

I mean that that's not entirely precise

way of putting it but maybe maybe you

get the idea and um

in like ancient India also

um there's not much talk about

homosexuality in the in the texts that I
can remember I mean there's

men consorting with pondicons who are
like eunuchs

who weren't considered to be fully male
or fully female they were sort of like
an alternative to to females at times or
something

but as a general rule people who are
sexually deviating from straight
heterosexuality were considered to be
um

like more perverse and like morally
perverse or more

um

unrestrained in their desires and then
there's modern evidence backing that up

like I've read in a medical guide that
it is not uncommon for a homosexual man
to have had more than 1 000 sexual
partners in his life
they're more unrestrained in that sense
at least a lot of them are
and so they got a reputation for
um just being sexually depraved
in uh terrible Buddhism so that
um any any man who wasn't just like a
straight male heterosexual going with
you know ancient Indian tradition that
he wasn't even allowed to be ordained as
a monk
so I think I'll just move on to the next
question this is the last question from

Conrad on uh precepts

and he says furthermore upon your Bossa

do you believe that perhaps many

Buddhists are dogmatically attached to

the precepts and don't make room to be

flexible surely it is the intention

which determines the righteousness of a

given action so surely in the right

mental States one could theoretically

break all precepts without it being

necessarily bad karma well I mean

there's always going to be at least a

little bit of Bad Karma again it's a

matter of choosing the lesser of two

evils

like the standard example is the monk

who just sits on a riverbank and watches

a pretty good old drown because it's
against the rules for him to uh be
touching her
by by Saving her
so I mean theoretically you could say
he's he's just remained morally neutral
by just sitting there you know he's not
thinking anything maybe he's just
meditating while she's out there
floundering and splashing and going down
for the third time
but um yeah I think a lot of monks would
just take the hit you know they'd do the
Penance and everything afterwards for
saving the girl from from drowning
um another my lesser case that I did is

it's against the rules for monk to
practice medicine like give medicine to
lay people like to your own parents or
do another Monk it's okay but to be like
dispensing medicines and and that sort
of thing to to lay people who come to
see you is against the rules but I had
this one one time I was living way out
in the Sticks

and this old man came and told me that
his daughter had had malaria and it was
it was like false super malaria the
worst kind of malaria like the deadliest
kind that she had had it for some
god-awful amount of time I can't
remember if it was six weeks or six
months

and I had some state of the art medicate
uh meditation

malaria medication so I just gave him
enough pills to to cure her and uh she
got better so I mean I broke a rule it
was a minor offense

but I figured it was better than let
some nice lady die

so yeah I mean some some monks are just
dogmatically attached to the precepts
and this Silo Bata paramasa it's called
in in Pali is just clinging to morality
and observances

in the observances you know they don't
even have any real morality involved
it's just it's just stop you know having

the right color of robes on or you know
not eating at the wrong time and it's
not even really doesn't have anything
inherently moral about it it's just an
observance you know it's just like a
tradition

and some monks just adhere to those
dogmatically

um

and I mean to some degree it's
it's not entirely blameworthy if if
you're just trying to be as strict as
you can

um and one one reason why they have
those rules is just for a monk and not
to have like this ego thing going on
where he's gets to decide what he's

going to do or not do when you got it
all laid out and this is what you're
allowed to do and this is what you're
not allowed to do and
um yeah it just makes life a lot simpler
maybe makes it easier to become
enlightened unless you're just clinging
to these rules and then just like
despising all the people around you who
aren't following the rules correctly I
went through I went through that when I
was a young monk just amongst all these
monks handling money and stuff it's like
you just want to just
slap him one
but I mean that's not good either that's

that's a bad karma too so you just have to put up with it or just uh you know mind your own business or you know if you can admonish another person with meta in your heart

then that's good but if you can't manage The Meta then you're better off not even trying to admonish them

so I think I'll just move on to the next question here this is from bpat427.

and bpat427 says

would a cashier at a gas station that sells beer be guilty of wrong livelihood how about someone who works in a machine shop that subcontracts to firearm manufacturers I suppose the latter example could also apply to a sheet

metal Factory that supplies arms

manufacturers with sheet metal

okay well the first part is easy would a

cashier at a gas station that sells beer

be guilty of a long livelihood yes

because right likelihood one of the

stipulations of that is no selling drugs

or intoxicants

so like even the the cashier at the

grocery store who's selling beer or or

like a can of raid you know bug spray

you know it's it's not right livelihood

and even in Burma sometimes there'd be

like the nice develop Burmese family

that would invite me to their tea shop

to like bless the tea shop you know and

then you know they're selling beer there
just because that's what everyone does
you know those tea shops have to have
beer as an option and people just go
somewhere else
and it's just it's the wrong livelihood
um

selling poison selling animals for
Slaughter selling slaves all of that is
wrong livelihood and also also selling
weapons so how about someone who works
in a machine shop like subcontracts to
Firearms manufacturers so long as he's
not selling weapons

you know if he's just making like a
trigger guard or something or just
selling selling metal that will get

turned in into weapons

um it would depend on his own mental

states to some degree uh technically he

wouldn't be selling weapons

and if he's just making it he's not even

selling it so

um yeah I don't think there's any rule

against making

like parts to a weapon I mean if you

wanted to like extend the stipulations

of the rules and say well that's not

proper either well that's that's your

call

but um

yeah someone who works in a machine shop

that subcontracts to Firearms

manufacturers so long as he's not
literally selling weapons
then then it's not wrong livelihood
at least that's that's my take on
but again it's it's there's all these
Shades of Gray

and uh

like personally I'm not entirely opposed
to the existence of weapons for
self-defense

but then again I'm kind of a heretic

so we'll just move on to the next

question this is from aurelian

and aurelian

oh he uh he watched a recent video that

I uploaded which is actually an old

video that I made as a monk or I'm

talking to a Burmese Buddhist society
and I'm trying to explain to them for
example why it is that most western
monks don't take abidama seriously so
I'm and I'm kind of pointing out that
you know Asian monks are less likely to
be strict in their practice than than
Western monks and you know explaining
why that is and so forth so anyway
aurelian saw that and he says how was
your experience navigating the internal
politics of the Burmese temple community
in the USA you seem to apologetically
drop some truth bombs on your audience
in Temple talks how receptive were the
audience and did you ever get any

pushback for your non-conformist ways

um

sometimes people would try to admonish

me a little bit

um but it wasn't because of the talks I

gave in public I'm pretty sure unless

they just didn't understand what I was

saying if I try and give a talk in

Burmese sometimes you know there'd be

like a some mistake made in in like my

my mass my lack of Mastery of the

Burmese language or something so people

come up to me afterward and and uh talk

to me about that and then they you know

I tried to explain it and all that's not

really what I meant I just maybe

accidentally said that or something but

um usually I get some pushback from from monks like I mean I didn't make it any secret that I didn't consider abidama to be uh like genuine teachings of Buddha so then I have monks you know kind of try and tell me you know you can get bad karma for heresy and this kind of a thing or or even you know you get like even not wanting to bow down to statues you know I'd have monks try to admonish me about that

I remember one time

um I was living at this Forest Monastery and this school mom came you know from town

and he just announced me that he wanted

to teach me the rules of monastic
discipline and I probably knew the rules
I've been asking this woman better than
anybody else at the moment at the time
he just assumed because I'm a foreigner
I didn't know anything I think and so I
just just to give him a little taste of
what he would be up against
teaching me the rules of monastic
discipline I'd say well I do not
consider the commentaries to be 100
authoritative and he just got this grin
on his face like oh these these
foreigners and he's like he just said
that's not possible
so I mean that's the kind of attitude
you get from a lot of monks but lay

people especially Asian lady people tend to be very humble and and

um

uh what is it they defer to monks

so if they say it's something that if I say something that they don't believe or anything they might talk to other people about it but they're not gonna like get on my case about

so most of the pushback I got for being a non-conformist was from other monks and

um I would push back at the push back and then they'd back off

so the next question also from aurelian would you ever consider robing up again

and re-entering monastic life perhaps if
a politically incorrect Temple Community
developed I know you have moved on to
householder life but have you made a
mental switch and moved on entirely for
the rest of this lifetime

I have no intention of becoming a monk
again I got as far as I could with it
um I mean theoretically in retrospect or
or whatever you could say well if I
tried this or that you know but no I've
I'm done being a monk for this life

um

see here's the last part of this
question though is have you made a
mental switch and moved on entirely for
the rest of this lifetime well I mean I

haven't entirely switched over I was a
monk for so long I was a monk for 30
years more than half my life
um that I mean still I'm
more in monk mode sometimes than is good
for a householder

um

so I think I'm always going to be sort
of like in a limbo this sort of
intermediate because I I mean I didn't
really identify as a monk a lot of the
time I mean I I didn't really identify
like I'm I'm this beaku like I think it
was like probably 10 years after I
became a monk it finally in my dreams
I was a monk more than half the time and

then sometimes there'd be like these
weird weird sort of ambiguous dreams
where I'm just hanging out with my old
buddies and they want to go to
McDonald's or something I'd say wait I
gotta I gotta wrap up in the road
properly before we can go and that kind
of a thing

so

um

yeah I mean I have no intention of uh
wearing Monk's robes again other than
just uh to show people how it's done
like I did in a recent video but yeah I
haven't made a complete
switch back to layperson and I don't
know if I ever will

so I'll just move on to irelian's next
and last question here

what would be the proper way for a
layperson to make Penance for breaking
the precepts for example I consciously
decide to enjoy some whiskey now what
retake precepts confession resolve to go
and sin no more well the the standard
Burmese way of doing it is you go to a
monk or a like a teacher tell them what
you did and then take the precepts over
again

that would be so it'd be like you
confess and then retake the precept
that's the like the standard traditional
way of dealing with it

so

yeah I mean if you want to make some
resolve or something to try and do
better in future that would be good too
but if I mean if you don't have someone
to confess to like you don't have a monk
you can just tell anybody that you think
might have the proper frame of mind to
uh

you know say something other than so
and then just retake the precept
and uh resolve to try and do better in
future if in fact that is your intention
I mean if it's not really your intention
you're just going to keep drinking
whiskey from time to time then there's
not much point in uh

like making any kind of resolve I mean
you can take the precept and keep it for
a week

now some people do that I mean a lot of
Burmese people they think you just get
Merit just for taking the precepts even
if you have no intention of keeping them
like I remember one time I was living
out in a cave in the woods this group of
people came including this teenage girl
they took eight precepts which includes
the no adornments part and then as
they're leaving I sort of just see a
flower on the ground just bend down pick
it up and stick it in her hair just five
minutes after taking the precepts

so that happens so they just think that they're going to get Merit just from taking the precepts and I'm trying to explain it to them it's like um you know you get more Merit for keeping precepts without taking them and taking precepts without keeping them you know it's sort of like uh one time I was way out in the sticks I was trying to teach a sermon of these Burmese Hillbillies and it was it was a story out of the New Testament of the Bible you know where you got a father has two sons and he tells the sons go out and work in the fields today and the first son says no I don't want to I'm just going to stay here

but then later he feels he changes his mind and goes out and does what his father told him to whereas the second Sons he says yes Father I'll do it and then he he doesn't even bother you know he's just talking [—] and I'm saying you know which son is better the one who you know told his father he'd do it and then didn't or the one who told his father he didn't want to and then he wound up doing it doing what his father told him to and they it was it was just too abstract they'd never heard anything like it before so they had no idea but obviously the first son you know in in the Bible the New Testament itself

you know it points out that the the
first son is the better son one who says
you know I no I won't do it and then he
winds up doing what his father told him
to and it's kind of like keeping presets
I mean obviously you're better off not
even bothering to take five precepts
formally and then just keeping them to
spontaneously out of the goodness of
your heart or whatever then taking the
presets and just knowing full well that
you're not even going to keep them
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from hey it's Tig
and hey it's TIG says
in your article titled hysteria and the
holy life

you wrote about your previous habit of
writing aggressively confrontational
letters to people

what communication medium did you use to
further this goal was it email postal or
something else well this was back in the
1990s and I was living in Burma most of
the time

so there was no email I mean there
wasn't there was no something else it
was just writing letters on paper
and putting them in an envelope and
putting a stamp on the envelope and the
address and everything and then
the launching it into the unknown not
knowing if it was ever going to reach

its destination because the government would be like intercepting my mail a lot of the time

so yeah it was it was entirely writing on paper the way Fred Fred Flintstone used to do it

okay so I'll just move on Ice question that was kind of a surprisingly easy question

next question is from bidon and bidon says

I have a question about judgment and meta I'm a very judgmental and easily disgusted person with regards to others for example fat people emotionally unstable women effeminate men initially give me a strong visceral feeling of

repulse and content as I've been practicing I can catch myself noting the initial judgment and then I can be understanding of different people's experiences and circumstances I've struggled with this and have felt guilty about being a bad person however I feel that judgment isn't on wholesome or uncritical or hypocritical hypocritical I feel the Judgment isn't on wholesome or hypocritical I'm only judgmental because I hold myself to those standards and see them as duties and non-negotiable for for strong healthy communities I'm aware that to reach higher spiritual

truths and insights than a more loving and acceptable accepting attitude should be cultivated my problem is I feel this is just how I'm wired and may not change nor do I want to lower my standards for myself or others do you have any wisdom or advice for developing a less judgmental attitude or how I can be comfortable with my attitude should it not be able to change well that's a good question and this has applied to me also I used to be very judgmental not nearly so much as I used to be but um

yeah some of the same kinds of people and also just sloppy monks I was very judgmental of just LAX sloppy monks that

weren't even trying

um

and

I mean one thing I can play devil's

advocate here a little bit and point out

that this attitude of just sort of like

being

irritable having aversion according to

the wisudi Maga for what that's worth

um such a disposition actually makes it

easier to become enlightened because you

kind of are disgusted with with the

world you're disgusted with some sorrow

and that that sort of like helps you to

get out of samsara but it's not really a

good justification for uh ATI Manya or

just

um having a low opinion of other people

you know ATI Manya is is a poly term

which literally means it's like contempt

contemptuousness

you know I'm just having a low opinion

of others

and um I think the main thing that has

helped me to be less judgmental of

people is having been a monk for so long

trying to be a saint and just failing to

be a saint just you realize how hard it

is to change your own programming

usually it takes some kind of breakdown

some kind of Crisis where it's just not

working anymore and then you sort of

like you have the breakdown and then you

can like restructure your personality
some degree especially if you've got a
wise compassionate teacher who's helping
you

um but you know I tried so hard

like I used to have a very low opinion
of of really overweight people it's like
you know how can they do this to
themselves you know there's so much
stuff that they can't even do you know
and then

um being a monk I mean that was not my
issue but I had my own issues and it was
just as hard to overcome them
and then you start having a more more
compassion for others when you're you're

striving to live up to this ideal that
you yourself can't live up to then you
know why should you insist that others
do the same kind of is that kind of
attitude and I think that more than
anything just kind of the humility that
comes from trying to turn yourself into
a saint or a stage something that you're
not

you're trying to become somebody
different

and you find out that it means you are
what you are I mean to a really profound
degree is that you just can't help it
schopenhauer wrote a lot about this kind
of thing

unfortunately I don't have any uh quotes

handy

but um yeah for me that's that's really
what helped me the most was you know
trying to live up to my own ideals and
then

um not entirely but to some degree
failing and then realizing just
um you know as someone who's not even
like dedicating their life to being a
saint you know somebody who's not even a
meditator who's who's maybe has not a
whole lot of self-awareness going on I
mean what what hope do they have
you know so it makes you have a lot more
compassion
you know like seeing little kids in some

Village and chances are they're just going to be subsistence Farmers you know poverty-stricken subsistence Farmers not much education not much intelligence maybe and it's like you know I can bless them and you know may you live long and be happy and all that but um

most people are just they're just not up for it

so I mean that's the best advice I can give you I mean aside from what I said before of just having that kind of aversive or uh that kind of mentality when applied to dhamma

it can help you to become enlightened just because you have like more aversion

or less more dissatisfaction or
disillusionment with regard to some
sorrow in general

but yeah just mindfulness also I mean
when it arises and you're you uh be done
here says he he already does that he
watches the the Judgment arise

but yeah but definitely for me it's just
um trying hard to change myself and
realizing just how hard that is causes
me to have a lot more of an unaccepting
attitude towards other people and their
their quirks I mean some some quirks are
more acceptable than others I mean
um you know like someone who's a like a
pedophile you know they're just you know

they're they're after little kids then
you know they can say that's that's the
they can't help it but if they can't
help it and they're doing something
potentially very harmful then uh yeah
they should just get locked up

so next question is from Iron Age
sophist

in Iron Age sophist says

according to Buddhist thought as it's
selfish to do good deeds with the motive
of making good karma for ourselves to
some degree

um you know there's little twinges of it
it depends on the mental States

um you want to do good karma I mean why
do you want to do code Karma just

because it's your duty to do good karma
that would be better than I want Good
Karma because I want you know the the
mansion in heaven with 500 Celestial
nymphs you know so I mean if you're
doing good karma just because you feel
like you ought to do good karma it just
seems like the good thing to do it's
like your sacred Duty then yeah you're
gonna

then it'd be less selfish than wanting
Good Karma so that good things can
happen to you

but there's always going to be a certain
amount of selfishness involved it's just
you can uh

make it milder or more severe

so let's see if I've answered it's like

I've answered this question so quickly

it's it's almost uh scaring me here

according to Buddhist thought is it

selfish to do good deeds with the motive

of making good karma for ourselves not

necessarily but I mean Buddhist ethics

are so finely tuned and damn near

anything you do is gonna have some

selfishness involved

so I'm moving on to the next question

here from thur

and thur says where do you come down on

whether smoking tobacco violates the

fifth precept I've seen pictures amongst

the southeast Asia smoking cigarettes

did you see this during your time as a monk even if they don't technically violate the precepts cigarettes are pretty nasty and addictive I myself have never and would never smoke them but I have considered smoking a pipe well I think one of the before before I get to that part I will say that if tobacco existed in the Ganges Valley during the time of the Buddha almost certainly he would have made a rule against it or the the senior monks who followed him you know when one year was being compiled and edited and turned into the systematic system of monastic discipline yeah almost

certainly tobacco would be against the rules because literally it is an addictive drug if desire is the cause of all suffering you don't want to be cultivating a habit that that increases desire obviously

but as I was going to say a little earlier here the problem especially in Thailand is that anjan man was a chain smoker allegedly and on John Mann was considered to be an aura hunt

so if if an araha does it it must be okay he also ate cheese in the afternoon and if an aura hunt can eat cheese in the afternoon then it must be okay and so you're not going to get anywhere with that I remember hearing that during the

the Burmese sixth Council back in the
1950s

um that uh a western Buddhist named
Christmas Humphreys he brought up to for
consideration at this Council

um should smoking tobacco be considered
moral or immoral and uh you know should
it be allowable or not allowable to a
good Buddhist and it was so it was just
too controversial I mean the monks who
run these great councils tend to be very
conservative very traditionalist you
know they don't want to deal with
anything that they haven't already dealt
with a hundred times at least and so
they just shelved it they didn't they

didn't want to deal with it

so yeah I mean it's pretty obvious that
from a dharmic point of view smoking any
or taking any addictive drug that gets
you addicted

you know I mean having a beer is not the
same as being an alcoholic

so I mean like

I don't know trying a cigarette see what
it's like is not going to be the same as
as being addicted to nicotine

but the more you do it the more likely
it is that you will get addicted so
you're better off uh keeping it to a
minimum to say the least

and now we've got a question from

this this guy is a wise guy I'm just

letting you know here his name is araga

Curtis samaja

araga cutie samanja

also known by other names including

trumptonshire gahopati

anyway he says according to Buddhist

thought is there a distinction between

kusla or wholesome behavior that

generates Merit leading to for example

Pleasant reverse versus behavior that is

efficacious at moving toward Bodhi for

instance when stopping meditation to

jump in a river to rescue a drowning

person be an example of the former while

impassively continuing to meditate would

be the latter well

I mean there is a lot of overlap
that um just doing good deeds
it creates Good Karma which then causes
smoother sailing in your future so that
your life and your mind become more calm
and clearer

so

yeah there's there's not a clear-cut
distinction between earning Merit and
going for enlightenment although
ultimately

if you're getting into the the higher
stages of practice then a monk
especially is encouraged to leave Merit
and demerit behind

that Merit and demerit are both Karma
and they're both you know they're

they're both samsaric they keep you in
samsara so a monk if he's going to
become enlightened has to leave behind
good and evil he has to leave behind uh
Merit and demerit

Good and Bad Karma

so yeah I mean in the earlier stages
than doing good deeds that could get you
into heaven or at least getting you into
a clearer ground for practice you know
was was fewer bad things happening to
you that are going to distract you and
derail your practice and so forth but
then once you get you know into the
higher levels of it then you have to
start leaving all that Merit stuff

behind

so I think I hope I answered that

question

and now

we've got a question from a person with

an equally difficult name

and CEO

vaccine says

why do Buddhist monks change their name

upon ordination it doesn't seem like

names were changed amongst in the times

of the Buddha that's kind of an

interesting question

um

when a monk is ordained he receives a

poly name and so I received the name

Ponyo basa when I became a monk I didn't

get to Peck it myself my preceptor
picked the name and one reason for that
is that your name has to be used in the
ordination ceremony which is all in poly
so you have to have a poly or at least a
polyized name

so that the like the declension of
mounds and so forth the declension of
the name and stuff fits poly grammar so
that you can do it in the ceremony and
the ceremony will be valid with correct
grammar and all that

but to some degree I mean it is true
that in Ancient India nobody changed
their names that um they had the the
same name as after they became a monkeys

before and

um I mean it's just now a tradition that you receive a formal poly name as a monk so that I actually knew a Burmese man who had a Polly name his name was uthihan which is

um the ooh is just like the honorific before the name sihan was just the Burmese pronunciation of the poly word siha which means lion you know so he already had a poly name and still they they gave him a different poly name also starting with s

so he became a sobida or something like that

so even though he already had a poly name they just gave him a different one

instead so I think that to that extent
is just tradition that you get a poly
name now

all right so CEO of auctions whose name
is getting slowly easier to pronounce

asks the next question here which is it
says in sutas the Buddha attains

Enlightenment and the higher knowledges
in the fourth genre but the commentaries
say that you can't get insight in genres
because you are too concentrated can you
explain this contradiction how the
Buddha could achieve enlightenment while
in Jannah well

according to Orthodox tradition you
don't get insight including liberating

Insight while you're in Janna it's just
that as soon as you come out of Jana
the Insight can arise just through
um like reviewing the experience or
whatever and

um like my favorite example of that
which I've I've told several times is in
the uh lesser discourse on voidness in
the Maji manikaya about a monk who
cultivates gradually more and more
vacuous like more empty mental States
until he gets to the the signless
concentration of mind the anime
is that right yeah anime

Which is higher than forth Jonah
supposedly that's the implication
and he gets to that level and then it's

only when he comes out of it that he
realizes that that was the highest level
of attainable
and that's still not it still had a
beginning and an end it's still just a
condition some sort of state and then
that's when the Insight arises and
that's when he becomes enlightened and
that's the way it's supposed to work is
when you're in Jonna you're just in the
state of bliss you know it's temporary
and like or temporary Liberation but
it's not permanent Liberation but then
when you come out of that insights can
arise like including liberating insight
and so the John I can might trigger the

liberating Insight what the liberating
Insight doesn't occur while while the
meditator is in genre

so I think that answers that question

so I'll just move on to the next one

also by CEO of action

in another video you say that going to
body scanning technique can probably
only get you to intermediate

intermediate level what techniques of
meditation can be done at beginner

intermediate and advanced stages as we
develop along the path

well

any meditation technique that has you
thinking and labeling doing a lot of
busy work

which may be necessary for a beginner
because

the The Beginner's mind has this

Restless hyperactive mind that has to be
set to work and just kept out of trouble
you know it has to be disciplined and
then gradually the Mind becomes calmer
and quieter and then you can get rid of
a lot of this busy work

so

you know any kind of technique where
you're still thinking you know when
you're when you're doing breathing
meditation you're just like breathing in
breathing out breathing in breathing out
you're still thinking and it's still

like it's like an anchor in samsara
so above that level is you're still
perceiving you're still focusing on
things and noting them silently even
though you're not labeling them
still I mean you're like focusing your
attention on one thing to the exclusion
of everything else you know you're
you're distinguishing between figure and
ground you know you're still essentially
in a some sort mental state
so that would be sort of intermediate
like Elementary would be you're still
like thinking and labeling the state
above that is you're not thinking in
symbolic thoughts anymore but still
you're perceiving and focusing and you

know you've got like a primary object
and so forth but then like when you get
to the advanced stage it just becomes
practically effortless
where

I mean your mind is just wide open
you know it's not concentrating on one
thing to the exclusion of everything
else and I mean people that say that
Jonna is a state of like fourth genre is
just like laser pinpoint on something I
think they might be confusing that with
a more of a hypnotic state
because I mean you're not more conscious
I mean maybe you've got the same amount
of Consciousness as before but it's

narrowed down into this laser beam
whereas I mean it seems to me that if
you're going to get closer to
Enlightenment your mind is going to be
opening out instead of closing up
and so you're going to be more and more
aware of the full field of of
Consciousness without narrowing it down
to just focusing on this or just
focusing on that
and when you get into those kind of
stages of these expansive just wide open
quiet stages I think that is it would be
a more advanced than like in the goenka
system where you're like looking for
some sensation in some quadrant of your
body then you as soon as you feel it you

note it and then you move on to the next
and just like you're scanning your body
it still does a fair amount of busy work
and it's essentially so I'm sorry what
you're doing it's a more you know higher
level more subtle level of samsara than
you know the guy riding the bus looking
out the window or eating his lunch or
whatever but um still
you're trying to quiet the mind and then
when it becomes like very quiet like no
moving parts
and you're still conscious I mean you're
not like in a coma or anything you might
be more conscious than before you're not
like becoming a hibernating squirrel or

anything like that then you're getting
into advanced days you're getting into
mystical States

where you're experiencing reality
directly and not through the
intermediate filter of a perceiving
perceiving mentality

so

what techniques of meditation can be
done at beginner intermediate Advanced
stages well like beginner and
intermediate you can still be doing
anapana until you just gets to the point
where it's just so subtle that your mind
just isn't really
like focused laser focused on this one
phenomenon anymore then you just move on

to

some kind of fourth some kind of janic

state I suppose

but when you're a beginner and your mind

is busy you have to keep your mind

occupied otherwise it'll just get bored

and distracted and drift off you know

you don't have enough busy work for it

to do then some of your excess mental

energy is just gonna like go off in its

own Direction but on the other hand if

your concentration is good giving it all

this busy work to do is it's just uh

counterproductive you're not gonna

you're not gonna get into any subtle

states that way

so I guess I should just move on to the next question

also by the same guy

and this is the second to last question

by the way

and he says other than the experience of

Nirvana itself and the extermination of

the poisons what do you think in our

heart gains for example the commentaries

claim our hearts have complete Mastery

of the pathways of the Mind see past

lives psychic powers Etc well not all

Aura hunts even have they even have

psychic powers receive their past lives

they're what are called dry visioned or

a hunts that didn't attain the higher

genres

you know they just did like Insight
Insight Meditation and became
enlightened that way and then they don't
have the psychic powers so really I
think it's it's not what an art gained
it's what he loses he doesn't
necessarily gain anything
he says he's just losing all the
delusion all the fake false stuff
all the stuff that he thought was real
or good or beautiful or whatever before
you know that all that all falls away
and the the absolute the highest truth
which is always there it is it's still
there he said now it's uh he's conscious
of it he's aware of it

so maybe they are hunting in the games
is just an awareness of of the highest
truth that stays with him well it was
always there but there's all this extra
stuff that got in the way so it's more
it's more accurate I think to say that
our Hans loses stuff and doesn't gain
anything

necessarily

and so I'll just move on to the very
last question also by CEO vacchen sipad
zidana

and this question is

what do you think about the psychic
powers claimed to be attained in the
ancient texts on John mun is the last
person many lay people seem to agree had

mind reading powers but do you think
these things even exist well

um there are still monks that are
considered to have mind reading powers

um I met uh

in Seattle long ago and he's supposedly
on on one of his disciples was telling
me that he had his mind read

um there's a monk in Thailand still or
at least 20 years ago I had a German
monk tell me if you have any doubts you
go meet this Monk and he'll he'll tell
you what you're thinking and of course
I've read lots of stories about like
neem karoli Baba who is a Hindu and uh
yeah he just had astonishing psychic

powers it was just some of the stories I mean some of the stories are probably unlikely to be true

but still I mean ROM Das is I I consider him to be a fairly honest person he is brutally honest with regard to himself and uh he had all kinds of weird stuff happening with maharaji or neem Karly mama

and I mean for that matter just parapsychology has pretty much demonstrated the existence of at least a small amount of psychic powers like the the ability to to um guest cards at uh consistently above the level of random chance it might just be like one

percent above random chance but still
when it's consistent and repeated that
indicates that

um everybody or virtually everybody has
like this latent capacity for that sort
of thing

ah so I'm not so sure about

um being the last well many lay people
seem to agree he had mind reading powers
but I mean there's there's lots of
people that have psychic powers

including

um this

parapsychology subjects

like um I was reading about a

parapsychology book it mentioned helmet

Schmidt I still wonder whatever happened to helmet Schmidt he was uh a research engineer for Boeing Laboratories this is several decades ago and they were having a slow time where there wasn't much research that was being done so he asked permission to study the effects of Consciousness on mechanical systems and they gave him the green light and he invented some really elegant I mean I don't know how you could debunk this stuff where he had like a random number generator based on a geiger counter and just this counter one two one two so you just get this random number of ones and twos or zeros and ones or whatever and

then he could

he could take that and transform it into
an audio thing where it's like the ones
would be a click in this ear and the
twos would be a clicking in the other
ear and then he'd sit someone down with
the headphones and just tell them try to
make more clicks in the left ear this
time

and

people consistently I mean he could do
thousands of tests they didn't take very
long and consistently even though he's
altering sometimes right here sometimes
left ear thing

um still is above random chance

and you know it's sort of like the ability of aspirin to prevent heart attacks they were doing like a study on that back in the 80s I think where they finally had to just break off the study because they considered it to be um like unethical to keep running the study and depriving the control group of the aspirin that obviously was conducive to keeping them from having heart attacks and the amount of above above random that these people were doing with the clicks um it was it was about the same percentage so I mean it was for for aspirin

preventing heart attacks I mean that was
conclusive evidence enough that they
just called off the study so that it was
unethical to continue and and deprive
the control group of the aspirin
and uh but the thing is that so many
scientists are just like
materialistic like scientific
materialists that they just cannot bring
themselves to believe that
psychic powers are even possible
but I consider them to be possible so
how do I think these things even exist
well mind is uh mind is number one
like the first verse of the dam upon on
the mind is is the Forerunner of all

things and uh

I'm not really a materialist

so I think

one of the reasons why we don't have

these Powers is just that we're so

locked into materialism now we just

don't don't we can't believe we don't

have the faith

which of course reminds us of uh Jesus

of Nazareth who supposedly had all these

powers where he was walking on water and

healing blind people and lame people and

so forth and I think there's a good

chance that he could do that stuff and I

don't think he was the only one

exactly how

um

the world is uh is not bound by
materialistic laws invented by
scientists

and the one book that I read that
explains this stuff the best I think is
uh the trickster in the Paranormal by
George P Hansen who says that uh
that this kind of stuff will never
really be proven because it's it's like
leaking through the cracks between the
rules and the laws that we consider
governs reality

that um once you get to a certain level
I mean like if you're not ordinary
whirling they might just have like a
weird mind that you know has a talent

for this sort of thing but you get up
into the like Advanced Sage level and uh
yeah they can start controlling it
or at least um they're they're way
better at doing it
so

I would just advise you to read the
trickster in the Paranormal by George P
Hansen Hanson who was a parapsychologist
um to get a good idea of how it works
I've talked about it lots of times and
this video is already over two hours
so I think I better uh call it good
so uh yeah I guess we're done
and uh if you have any questions you are
very welcome to ask them
anything that you think that I would uh

be likely to answer especially questions
about Buddhism or spirituality or
philosophy Eastern religions Burma me
personally living in caves that kind of
thing

um you know feel free to ask in the
comments below if you have access to my
subscribe star you can ask there if you
have access to uh my uh Discord server
you can ask there and uh check out the
uh

URL links below

and uh give this video a like if you
please

and be happy

hello and welcome to episode 42 of
question and answer I am your host Ponyo
Bossa and this is your co-host
Adelaide

she is the new dog in this house and
she's a very nice dog although she's got
like one pale blue eye that kind of
reminds me of something out of an Edgar
Allan Poe story but

as it may we've got lots of questions
and so I'm just going to Wade right into
this and the first question is from I
believe he's called Yuichiro
and Yuichiro says I read an article by a
right-wing traditionalist complaining
that modern Movie heroes hesitate to

kill their enemies and show mercy and
this is apparently libtard propaganda I
don't like Marvel movies but I don't see
this as particularly bad morals it seems
to be promoting compassion

however I can also see the argument for
warriors carrying out their Duty no
matter what and just killing their
enemies without a second thought like
Krishna told Arjuna which one would be
better morals in your opinion

okay well I mean the good guy is not
wanting to kill the bad guys isn't
something new I think Roy Rogers in like
the really old black and white movies
wouldn't shoot any of the bad guys he
would just lasso them off their horse

and just incapacitate them until they
got arrested or something

um

but yeah I mean obviously from a
Buddhist point of view from the point of
view of Buddhist morals

um not killing is better than killing so
if you're getting to the point of like a
samurai warrior just killing out of a
sense of honor and Duty

um that's amoral that's that's not so
much moral as just being

um

efficiently amoral I think

so

yeah definitely from the point of view

of Buddhist morals not killing is preferable to killing regardless of who you are or what the circumstances are and that's one reason why um the most serious Buddhists are supposed to be monks who renounce the world and don't have a woman and children that they have to defend and so they can just think just in a saintly matter let themselves be killed without without killing the guy who's trying to kill them

so I guess that answer has been that question has been answered so I'll just move on to the next one as the puppy snarves on my hand

okay next question from Yuichiro is

as follows a libtard Buddhist friend
libtard Buddhist friend of mine said he
reached Jonah while being a Layman and
only meditating half an hour a day I'm
skeptical however he's not the type to
lie do you think this is possible or
likely

well the odds against it are pretty high
but I mean it is possible even if you've
got like a 0.1 percent chance you've got
a thousand people doing something that
means just going with Statistics one out
of a thousand would uh succeed

so

there is a good chance that if this
person is honest and thinks that he's

got Jonah just from meditating half an hour a day it's possible and this is often the case that he had some kind of strange experience and just assumed that it was John or he went into like a like a trance State and just uh just thought that it was Jonah and I think like like I've said many times on on my various videos probably most people in Burma which is a devoutly terrible Buddhist country

um they really can't tell the difference between Jonah and like a auto hypnosis so it may be that the person just went into a Trans State and just assumed that it's drawn up but really doesn't know enough about Janna to be able to tell

whether it's religion or not but I mean
without really

um meeting this person or talking with
this person then you know it's possible
it's it's not entirely it's not
completely impossible somebody some
people have parami which means that
um from a Buddhist point of view they've
cultivated

um like virtues over past lives and so
they just are born with a certain amount
of talent and I've met people that just
really have meditative Talent they're
just really good at it naturally
so it could be one of those people too
despite being a libtard

so

I guess I'll just move on to the next

question and this is from Jess

and Jess says

what evidence is there that Buddha's

experience of Nirvana wasn't just a

hallucination or made up entirely it

seems most Buddhist I encounter have

already drunk the Kool-Aid and are not

capable of objective rational criticism

criticism after a while in the religion

it seems the oral and monastic tradition

meant to preserve the teaching has

become very cult-like over time

well the oral and monastic tradition I

don't think has become particularly

cult-like although some some Buddhist

groups can be called like like

um even though I think the goenka method

um it has been the most successful at

spreading dhamma in the west like

genuine dhamma still I mean they can be

pretty cold like

so there is that

what was regard to the question here

what evidence is the Buddha's experience

of Nirvana wasn't just a hallucination

or made up entirely well I mean

technically it wasn't even an experience

I mean Nirvana

it's it's you're getting into uh

questionable territory

uh even referring to you know somebody's

experience of Nirvana because Nirvana is completely off the scale and if you read texts like the the Attica wag of the suttony Pata you know that I mean you you dismiss any kind of mental state like like a serious meditator who's going for for enlightenment you just let go of every mental state it says in the sutiny Pata or in in antakawaga you just you know just let go of all perceptions you know just anything and so with that kind of a view I don't think that you would confuse Nirvana with a hallucination if I mean any kind of perception is is dismissed as not it then

I mean if you if you read some of these texts it's very sophisticated and there's no way to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Buddha was truly enlightened there's no way to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that anybody is truly enlightened

so

um you just go with the evidence of the texts just the subtlety and sophistication of the explanations or instructions on how to become enlightened how to attain nibbana how to I mean whether it's even an experience or not is questionable

so

the Buddha's uh Enlightenment is like an
entirely different issue from
um most of the Buddhists that Jess
encounters having uh drunk the Kool-Aid
and not being capable of objective
criticism of their
of their their system their their
religion or whatever it is
so

I guess I'll just move on to the next
question

and this is from

I think it's pronounced a vanity
and this is in response to the previous
q a where somebody asked me if I'd seen
Fight Club and I I mentioned that
I have seen it it's one of my favorite

movies it's in my top 10 but not in my
top three although it's it's close you
know it might be number four or five but
um let's see what are my top three
favorite movies

well I should just say that they're all
um

like romance dramas

like there's this movie I like uh touch
me feel me about the death mute
ballerina who falls in love the
choreographer and stuff but

I wouldn't I won't be that cruel to the
person who commented and saying please
don't say that it's it's romance dramas
that are your top three so my first my

favorite movie of all time would be

Monty Python and Holy Grail

number two would be the Matrix and

number three would be apocalypse now but

not the Redux version like the original

movie version of Apocalypse Now like

without the French Plantation and I'm

sure the Playboy bunnies are very nice

but like the prolonged scene with the

Playboy bunnies

um

and the dog is chewing on my finger as

you can see

um

but yeah the original the original

version of uh of Apocalypse Now would be

number three I think

so and I suppose

one thing they all have in common

they're all philosophical movies you

might think that Monty Python and holy

grail isn't philosophical but I mean

it's self-referential

which in a way makes it philosophical

like there's the there's the guy like

um they meet this guy who's referred to

as the man from scene 23 or something

like that like inside them in the movie

you know they're talking about it's the

man from scene 23.

but I'll just move on I don't need to

keep talking about this this is the next

one is from Mary

spelled m-e-r-r-y

and this question I think is a trick

question he says for Q a number 42 I

want the answer to life the universe and
everything

and I think that comes from The

Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

where like the answer to life the

universe and everything is like number
42.

but um I'm I'm very skeptical from the

very beginning I've been very skeptical

of the idea that the answer to life the

universe and everything would be a

number

unless maybe it's like the number one or

the number zero

but um

yeah the answer to life the universe and
everything let's let's just go with
dependent coal Rising potential
and I've talked about that at length
recently on another video so I'll just
move on to Fred's next question
and that is who is Fred the guy is
amazing quicker than me I see his
comments on Twitter Youtube everywhere
the guy is my hero I mean I am creepy
but that guy is just a whole another
level Mary says
and friends he's he's just uh a
supporter and uh fan of my my videos my
channel I guess and uh he lives in New

Zealand and I really don't know a whole lot about him but um yeah I'm pretty sure he lives in New Zealand so you can uh go with that so I'll just move on a nice question and this is I like this question I mean I pretty much like all questions but every once in a while you get one that's kind of interesting one that I've never had to answer before and uh this one is kind of one of those Lucid says what do you think of the so-called Buddhist tooth and Mystic relics in general well there's more than one Buddhist

tooth there's like the famous One in Sri Lanka they've got the Temple of the the sacred tooth or something there and um I was ow she's biting my ear I was told that or I read that when the Portuguese uh colonized parts of Sri Lanka one of the first things they did in their history in their like religious intolerance is they publicly smashed the tooth there and within like 24 hours somehow the tooth had miraculously respawned which um it's I mean that in itself is kind of suspicious to me but I have seen a a replica of the other canine tooth both of these are supposed to be like the the canine teeth of the

Buddha

and uh I saw a replica of the Chinese

one there's one in China

and the Chinese sent this tooth

um I'm pretty sure it wasn't a replica

um so yeah forget the part about me

seeing a replica we'll get to the

replica part in a little bit but they

they lent this tooth to uh Burma and I

went and looked at it when it was in

Rangoon and it was about this big and it

had several little root things on one

one end and the other end was just kind

of beveled

and my guess is

I mean the whole tooth was like this big

it was a big tooth and my guess is it's

like from some kind of
rhinoceros maybe a taper you know some
kind of some kind of animal that is not
a human being

um

so

um yeah I'm kind of skeptical of any
Buddhist tooth Relic but what the
Burmese just took it very seriously and
they built a pagoda largely with slave
labor I have I have read

um to to house a replica of this you
know like five six inch long the
rhinoceros tooth or whatever it was I
mean it obviously did not look like any
human tooth

so what do I think of the so-called
Buddhist tooth I think they're probably
fake

um

I mean the Buddha was cremated and uh I
mean I have seen what are likely to be
some of the remains from The Cremation
and they were just like little pieces of
charred bone I don't know if any teeth
survived

but uh the next part of this question is
what is what do I think of Mystic relics
in general well as I just mentioned I
have seen the Peshawar relics in
Mandalay and um I was
kind of

in a state of mild awe I guess actually

seeing a part of gonama Buddha himself
or what is likely to be

a genuine relic of the Buddha himself
um

so you know it can inspire a certain
amount of

you know respect or awe or devotion or
something like that but I don't think
that they have any magical powers other
than just what the people around them

you know impose upon them I mean like

you believe in something fervently

enough then Miracles can happen

and so I'm sure that the relics

including fake ones have inspired enough
devotion and just sort of fanaticism

that

like miraculous things have happened

like healings and so forth and now the

puppy is like getting under my arm

and so I'll just move on to the next

question

and this is from Austin and she's like

licking

oh now she's behind me ah

puppies are like that you know

so the next question is from Austin

and Austin says oh she's snarfing my

ears so bad

Austin says I was discussing my interest

in

I was discussing my interests

I was discussing my interest in Buddhism

with the Vietnamese Christian friend who shared with me his perspective that Buddhism could lead to social stagnation he explained that if everyone were to become a monk it would cause societal collapse do you believe that Christian societies operate on a more effective system for generating wealth than Buddhist societies well that's that's kind of

first of all it's like a facile kind of a bogus argument it seems to me and also it points out just how corrupt Christianity oh how corrupt Christianity has become just a second we gotta reposition this

dog my earlobe is just too close to her
mouth

so first of all

um

this person says that Buddhism could
lead to social stagnation because if
everyone were to become a monk it would
cause societal collapse well yeah I've
heard that many times before and it's
just a plain fact that not everyone's
going to become a monk or a nun it's
always going to be a tiny amount of
people who are doing that and so it's
just kind of a bogus argument
but with regard to Christianity I mean
Christianity used to be pretty I mean
it's like

woe under the rich you know gather not
up your Treasures upon the Earth sell
all that you have give the money to the
poor and follow me it's just the Bible's
full of this stuff you know it's like
love of money is a form of idolatry and
that stuff just gets ignored and it's
it's ignored by most Buddhists also like
it's strictly against the rules for
monks to handle money and I guess
there's a question a little farther down
that addresses that particular issue and
98 of Asian monks or let's be charitable
and call it 95 of monks
um of terravonna Buddhist monks just go
ahead and handle money anyway

and that's the way with Christians I
mean the Bible says you're supposed to
be poor

and Christians just don't want to do
that

so

I suppose like corrupt Christianity
it may be a more effective system for
generating wealth

but then again if you're truly spiritual
generating wealth is not really a
priority

voluntary poverty is considered to be a
virtue by biblical Christianity and from
uh Orthodox terravada Buddhism

from from the point of view of both
and I think I'm going to put the dog

down hey you go in here

there you go

Okay so

um yeah with regard to this question by Austin first of all you know it's just not going to happen that most people or let alone everybody is going to become an ordained monk or nun which causing societal collapse because monks aren't even allowed to feed themselves they got to be supported by laypeople

foreign

my sophistication by using paper

umbrellas now

and uh

yeah Christianity was just as hard on

on the keeping of money as early

Buddhism was

oh you want back out do you

come here let's just put you down here

oh

yeah you go there there you go

um

yeah like like it says that Jesus told

his disciples you know not to carry

money

although I think there's uh some

ambiguity in the New Testament I think

there's other scenes where where they do

handle money

but um yeah I would I would just

consider this argument to be somewhat

facile there have been prosperous

Buddhist countries like um you know the
the mauryan empire under Ashoka who
apparently was fairly prosperous
um and that was it was Buddhist so
but any

any culture that's going to be
profoundly spiritual I mean the making
of money economic Prosperity is not
going to be nearly as much of a priority
as you know some sort of spiritually
bankrupt

protestantism or something where
um people are just ignoring certain
parts of the Bible that are inconvenient
in order to make as much money as they
can

so

I think I'll just move on to Austin's

next question

see

Austin says I understand that lying is a

fundamental principle in Buddhism to

refrain from but there are some people

that cannot take unvarnished truth

without being severely damaged in

emotional well-being

what should be done about this if

consequentially people suffer less from

White Lies well I mean you're still

lying even if it's a white lie so I mean

you should either tell the truth or

remain silent

um although I mean I was talking about

this in a previous the the previous q a
you know giving an example of how you
know if telling a lie might save
somebody's life or something like that
um I mean it's a judgment call it's
still going to be immoral
it's still going to be unethical to lie
but it may be the lesser of two evils so
in a case like that but if you're just
trying to spare somebody's feelings
I mean that's that's a judgment call
also
you know like uh let's say your woman
gets her hair cut really short and dyed
purple and I'll see how it looked and I
mean you've got to live under the same

roof with her you might have to uh kind
of fudge things a little bit

but

nevertheless I mean it is best to tell
the truth

um if possible and I remember Paul Lowe
saying wants that

if everyone just told the unvarnished
truth

that you know like hypocrisy and and
white lies and all that were gone just

lying out of politeness you know like

I'd like to come but I'm busy when

actually you just don't want to come

that kind of thing I mean that's just

common that's that's just very very

common

but as I was saying Paulo once said that
if everybody just started telling the
truth telling what they really think
it would just
like Civilization would just blow up you
know it would just be like chaos just
Mayhem for maybe two weeks or so and
then by the time the dust finally
settled the civilization would be
operating at a higher level of
consciousness

but

um there was a famous saying I just read
just recently

I can't remember who said it though it's
like you know if if the truth hurts them

then let them hurt

some something along those lines I think
it was like Ben Franklin or somebody who
said that

but I mean to some degree you have to
have compassion but still if you lie I
mean you are lying and you know you take
responsibility for that so at the very
least it should be the lesser of two
evils

so I'll just move on to the next

question also from Austin

and Austin says have you ever witnessed
a monk harnessing psychic powers and is
it permissible to discuss such matters I
understand that within the monastic
Community discussing magical powers is

prohibited well technically it's not
exactly prohibited it's just that a monk
is not allowed to admit to having
psychic powers to a layperson

I mean amongst themselves monks can talk
about it although even then is probably
not the best

um

so I mean the rule is against a monk
discussing superhuman mental States
especially his own to Malay people to
unordained people that is against the
rules

so I mean even if he does have Jonna if
he admits to having Jonah to a layperson
he's still broken a rule it's not nearly

as bad of a rules if he lies to a
layperson saying that he's got Jonah
when he really doesn't that's
excommunication that's that's one of the
worst things a monk can possibly do
ah so

um have I ever witnessed a monk
harnessing psychic powers

I don't think so I I've never really
hung out with a miracle working monks
um I've met a few that had a reputation
for doing that and sometimes you can't
really tell I mean

um you meet some Monk and he's he's
looking at you intently for all you know
he might be reading your mind but he
doesn't say anything about it so

something like that but my understanding of psychic powers among spiritual practitioners is not a matter of harnessing it it's just that synchronicity and just weird stuff happens spontaneously around certain people

um and it's not a matter of them like deliberately doing it they just might be talking

off the top of their head and it's just as though you know it's intended for one person in particular you know they've got some deep down issue they have to deal with and they have to they have to hear that particular thing in order to

like open this door inside them or
something

uh so and it just happened spontaneously
just you know the flow of karma or

something is enhanced

around certain people

and I've heard anecdotal stories about

like weibo Seattle

um you know he would know in advance

when people are going to show up and

this was back before cell phones or

anything like that he would just start

you know he'd tell the people to get

ready because we're gonna have visitors

soon and you know he'd give details and

then they'd you know lo and behold they

show up or

um

not not just things like that but I mean
I have heard stories about weibo Seattle
having these psychic powers but he died
before I ever went to Burma

in Seattle apparently could read minds
or reportedly could read minds I met him
once but he wasn't obviously reading my
mind while I was talking with him

so I guess I should just move on to

Austin's next question

and he says

what should I do about the limited

availability of genuine Buddhist

teachings in my area although there are

a few zendos nearby where I can practice

meditation one of them requires a subscription fee to access the Nama which seems contradictory to Buddhist principles the other zendo has suspended their sitting practice due to covid and the head instructor who is a roshi has been removed from the Zen Community for engaging in sexual misconduct I'm uncertain of where to turn for authentic Buddhist guidance and practice I visited a terravonna watt but unfortunately nobody there spoke English or engaged with me it appeared that the primary focus of the community was on providing meals to the monks and Performing repetitive walkings around the temple I didn't feel a sense of connection or

engagement with the community
and then uh as an update in parentheses
he says uh I went to a new want today
and had the pleasure of meeting a very
friendly monk we had a great
conversation about dama for about an
hour and he kindly invited me to come
and meditate anytime additionally he
invited me to join him for Maga Puja
which was a wonderful experience
so to some degree I think Austin's
predicament has been alleviated somewhat
but uh the main question is the very
first sentence up here what should I do
about the limited availability of
genuine Buddhist teachings in my area

well I mean you have access to the
entire poly to pitica it's on the
internet you can buy hard bound or you
know hard copies of it so that should
really be the uh
the like the the gold standard for for
dhamma and genuine Buddhist teachings is
just read the original text in good
translations and then if you hear a
dhamma teacher
uh you compare what he's saying with
the books
you know like dama books you know the
ancient ones that resonate deeply with
you
so if you can't find a really good
teacher like a flesh and blood one

then uh I mean you've always have
recourse to the dhamma like the Buddha
before he died said that you know after
he is after he has gone the Dhamma will be
the teacher

so

uh get a good copy of the sutiny Pata
for example or the the majum and ikaya
so I think uh I assume that's a good
enough Quest answer to the question so
I'll move on to Austin's next question
and Austin says is living as a layperson
better than living as a monk I notice
that you seem healthier and happier now
that you're in a loving relationship and
have access to amenities such as food

and a gym whenever you want which may not be readily available to monks who lead a more austere and contemplative lifestyle

um is living as a layperson better than living as a monk it depends on what you want out of life I suppose

um being a monk is is unnatural you know being a celibate monk who eats once a day doesn't have a home doesn't you know supposedly ideally doesn't really have a family who's like going alone like the Horn of the rhinoceros maybe not even knowing where he's going to sleep each night not knowing what he's going to eat every day it's it's really unnatural and then you add on top of that just the all

the rules have to be followed and just
the meditation

um and it puts a real strain on people
and

I mean monks are no exception I think uh
one of the reason why like famous Saints
wind up having like horrible diseases
and so forth is just it causes such a
strain on the system that it causes an
imbalance which then can result in
health problems

um some people just imposed health
problems on themselves you know like
there was uh some some French woman in
the Middle Ages
uh she didn't get canonized but she was

beatified

and I mean she would just eat tiny amounts of bread that was so tough that it would cause her mouth to bleed when she was eating it and one time she got so sick that the doctor told her she had to eat meat and she ate the meat but then later he compensated by cutting an equal amount of Flesh off of her own leg and this kind of stuff I mean when you get to that extreme obviously you're not going to be a healthy person but even just living the life of a monk is unnatural for most people I mean some people they're just some some men for example it just comes natural to them that they

don't have a relationship you know
they're just naturally don't have much
of a sex drive they don't have social
instincts they just like living a simple
life alone
and just meditating and chilling out all
the time and they might get along fine
but
um
just living a more natural life is more
conducive to you know having like a
healthy flow of energy going through you
being healthier in general
um I used to have like bad skin for
example
like blotchy skin when I was a monk and

that's pretty much gone away

um due to my uh more natural and just
having more love in my life I suppose
that that probably is a contributing
factor

so but then again I mean if you want
Nirvana or you really want to live up to
these exalted ideals then I mean there's
always going to be a trade-off there's
always going to be a price
you know so it's like the disadvantages
are you know like the unnatural strain
on your your mind and your body but it
the advantages are you know you're
chilled out your mind is clearer and um
you know you're more more likely to get
inside like deep inside

and plus you can just meditate all day

so

um whether it's better living as a lay

person or living as a monk depends on

what it is you want out of life

so I'll just move on Austin's next

question

and Austin says

I heard a professor say this about

Buddhism quote Buddhism is concerned

with the problem of solving suffering so

the first Axiom is always we don't want

to suffer here already I have problems

if there is any point of psychoanalysis

it's that we want to suffer unquote

thoughts on this well it is true that

people don't become enlightened not not
simply because they're not trying hard
enough to become enlightened it's
they're trying all the time to remain
unenlightened and it is true people want
to suffer

for various reasons partly it's just
force of habit a lifelong habit of being
miserable you just kind of identify with
that that's like who you are and if you
stopped being that miserable it would be
like a part of you with dying because
that's become like a part of your
personality like a part of who you
identify with
so there is that
and also

um if you're living like especially a worldly kind of life there's there's going to be happiness and unhappiness I mean you can't just have one without the other

you know there's they're going to remain in Balance it's so it's it's like a roller coaster ride whereas a monk is just going for like

flat you know smooth sailing

you know there's just neutrality you know he's avoiding pleasure as well as pain or at least just trying to be relatively indifferent to pleasure as well as pain

um

but with the monk who's you know trying to uh eradicate suffering then uh it I mean he's got to be serious about it and um you know a monk who becomes or a person who becomes enlightened isn't like the people that this professor is talking about how people want to suffer I mean most people do but then again most people don't become enlightened and also

Buddhism as a path to the end of suffering that's kind of like a heart-oriented approach to Buddhism there's also a more head-oriented approach which is the approach I generally took and that is that you're not trying to eradicate suffering you're

trying to eradicate delusion

and it's essentially the same path

but

um I think some head-oriented Professor

like this might have a better

appreciation for

um a spiritual path aimed at the

eradication of delusion

and if you're adequate delusion you

eradicate suffering also because the

suffering comes from delusion

so there is that

so I guess I'll just move on to the next

question and this is from the z123

and z123 says what's your insta ID can

you help me well I've I've never been on

Instagram I don't I don't do Instagram

so I don't have an insta ID as far as I know

and the skin you helped me I assume that just means can I help z123 by giving my insta ID

and in that case no but in other ways maybe maybe I can help you if you have you know questions about dhamma I can I can help you with that I suppose so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from Johannes

and Johannes says do you have any idea why your samadhi didn't improve anymore after a certain point have you tried doing the Tonga so that's two questions

um

so the first question is

um I I've explained you know why I

stopped being a monk and the number one

reason like the first one that kind of

spawned any subsequent reasons was I

just stopped making progress

for years I stopped making progress

probably the the best meditation of my

life was around 2004 or at least

the best meditation of my life ended

around 2004.

and so Johannes you're just asking if I

have any idea why it didn't improve

anymore

um

I am not sure

possibly

um like I said I've just got as far as I

could with it it's like maybe you know

that was just sort of my limit

maybe you know just Karma you know

paramis like I mentioned

um

also there's just like this

um imbalance this strain that I was

under that I mentioned just a few

minutes ago that just living a monastic

life causes this strain and imbalance

where it can

and uh that was just becoming like a

hindrance

um

so yeah also just

um I burned out on Burma
and but then coming back to America
wasn't really working very good for
someone wanting to live the life of a
monk in Burma you can live the life of
among almost exactly like it says in
this in the text you can just wander
around you go into a village with your
bowl people put food in you don't have
to use you know electricity or anything
you know it doesn't really get cold
enough to be lethal in the tropics
you don't have bills to pay
then you come back to America and it's
it's really difficult to to live
um you know as a monk is supposed to

live in the texts and I mean you can
there are ways of kind of approximating
it there are ways that a monk can live
in the west without actually breaking
rules but you're living almost like a
prisoner

so that was kind of a factor also
but um yeah I think my samadhi didn't
improve after a certain point it was
just the the struggle the strain of just
having to try as hard as you can
with very limited results very sporadic
unpredictable results eventually your
beginner's mind and your enthusiasm for
practice start to wane
so that that's also a factor
but I guess I should just move on to the

the second part of johannes's question

here have I ever tried doing dotonga

yeah yeah I did lots of dutongas

um I tried not to make a deal try not to

make a big deal out of doing the tongas

like for years and years

um I did the the one meal a day stuff

and it's the ones the ones sitting

although sometimes like in the middle of

my meal I would stand up take a step to

the left take a step back to the right

sit back down and finish my meal just so

I wouldn't technically be practicing the

new Tonga of eating in one sitting every

day

um I I sat I I never lay down for

more than a year that was when I was a junior Mom I had to pretty much stop the sitters practice just sleeping in a sitting position

um when I got to Burma and it was it was so hot that

I just found out that just sleeping spread eagle on a concrete floor was the coolest way of sleeping and so I just started doing that

you sleep leaning back against something it just gets this fouled with sweat

so yeah I did I did quite a lot of dotonga and monks aren't really supposed to talk about that but I'm not a monk anymore so yeah I practiced uh quite a lot of butanga

so I think I'll just move on to

johannes's next question

and the puppy wants to bite my ear some

more don't you

yes here there it is

so johannes's next question do you think

spiritual progress is even possible

without a Sangha or at least without

spiritual friends who are going down the

same road I'm currently all alone in

nature well

maybe picking up the dog was not the

best idea

okay I'm currently all alone in nature

living on a Cherry Orchard and honestly

sometimes meditating seems to disturb me

more than just focusing on all the tasks
at hand and being a kind person

is it idiotic to think that we can just
power through and get it over with the
practice all by ourselves and wouldn't
it be just be better to try and focus on
being a good human with a good heart I'm
thinking here of the sun Leica

quote it is impossible here in tuna that
quite secluded from sensual Pleasures
secluded from unwholesome States some
biku enters upon and abides in the first
genre which is accompanied by applied
and sustained thought with Rapture and
pleasure born and seclusion you might
think thus I am abiding in effacement
but it is not these attainments that are

called effacement in the noble ones
discipline these are called Pleasant
abidings here and now in the noble ones
discipline now joonda here effacement
should be practiced by you others will
be cruel We Shall Not Be Cruel here the
basement should be practiced thus others
will kill living beings we shall abstain
from killing killing living beings here
a basement should be practiced thus
others will take what is not given we
shall abstain from what is not given
here effacement should be practiced thus
uh let's see let's get up to the top
here
oh okay so the main point of the

question here is Johannes is asking
um is spiritual progress even possible
without a Sangha or at least without
um what in the poly is called the
kalyanamita which is the the good friend
the spiritual friend who is like your
guide

um well obviously it is possible
um to make spiritual progress like you
know you've got the sun like a suta here
which he's he's just essentially aiming
that particular passage towards a lay
person just following the five precepts
apparently but um

uh I mean you've got like the rhinoceros
horn this this course you know go alone
like the Horn of the rhinoceros and I'm

thinking I'm gonna put the dog back down
again because she's being very frisky

okay

so

yeah it is possible the main thing that
you need a teacher for

and I mean this is another reason why I
stopped making progress I suppose I just
did not have a teacher that I could
really trust and accept

because I've had bad karma with teachers
so this is sort of an answer to

the above question that I was kind of
Meandering around with is uh yeah I did
not have like the good friend

someone who who I could really want to

be like that person

you know it's like most of of my

teachers were

good-hearted monks Asian monks but very

very narrow-minded just very culturally

conditioned with a very dogmatic

approach that I just could not follow

so I was thrown back on books as my main

teachers and

um the thing about a book is if if

you're doing something wrong the book

isn't just gonna like speak up and say

Hey you shouldn't be doing that so it is

good to have a person who can point out

your weak spots and that you trust

enough that when they point out your

weak spots you just don't get upset and

then just say [__] you or whatever
so that's the main
um I mean some people they have enough
of a social mentality that they can
practice better when they're in a group
like you might be shamed into not just
getting up and walking away if you're in
a meditation Hall and everybody else is
still sitting so you don't want to be
the only person who just gets up and
walks out just because your legs are
tired or you're bored or you want to do
something else
but um you know so having a spiritual
teacher is important but it should be
someone who I mean you you trust and

someone you would want to be like

presumably

um

and it's not necessarily easy because
most spiritual teachers are relatively
ignorant you know they're just common
worldlings too

and uh even the ones that have some
attainment it might be there's like this
culture barrier where they're you know
they're wise but still they're just
talking in accordance with their
cultural conditioning and so forth and
it just may not resonate with you so
again

um Sometimes the best you can do is just
read the ancient texts

um or just find somebody who writes
things that really resonate with you
that that really seem to be beneficial
in waking you up

oh see

but I mean if you're just focusing on
tasks at hand and and being a kind
person it is kind of a worldly I mean
you're you're making good karma you're
earning Merit you know that's the road
to Heaven more than it is the road to
enlightenment

if you want Enlightenment I mean it's
it's subtle you're going to do a lot of
meditation and if you do have like an
enlightened teacher or at least a very

wise one it can be helpful

foreign so I'll just uh move on to the

next question by Johannes

his last question is

do you think there's a difference

between working against your five

hindrances in daily life and working

against them in meditation

um

it'd be a difference in degree

I think

a difference in degree rather than kind

because I mean working against the

hindrance in your daily life that's like

the the rough work you know that's the

the course adjust and working against

them in meditation that's the fine

tuning you know it's like
um working against the five hindrances
in daily life that's like using a chisel
to carve a statue and then working
against them in meditation is more like
using the the Sandpaper to finish the
job

so I mean both of them are doing
essentially the same thing although in
meditation you you got more clarity and
you can see the small stuff
more easily whereas in in daily life
you're dealing with the bigger the
bigger manifestations of your
defilements I suppose
so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from Eric

and Eric says recently read an article

where AI was generating Christian

sermons with some folks claiming the

work was soulless what do you think AI

generated Buddhist sermons or discourses

would be like

well it depends on the AI I suppose I

mean it wouldn't matter if a Buddhist

sermon is soulless because Buddhism

teaches that there is no soul at least

not an ultimately real one

so

um yeah I suppose or Jack Kerouac

possibly while he was drunk wrote like a

Mahayana Buddhist scripture which reads

like I mean it's it's it's fairly wise

so I assume like uh you know you program
the AI well enough and uh it should be
able to come up with

um you know decent Buddhist sermons

although I mean I doubt that AI is is

Advanced enough to come up with anything
original

like the the computer itself isn't going
to have any insights it's just going to
be you know just regurgitating what's
been programmed into it you know just
kind of rearranging the sentences or
something

but I I really can't say

um I don't have a lot of experience I
guess there's some new AI

program where you can that will just like write scientific papers and and that sort of thing which is going to cause problems in schools where students are just having this AI write their papers for them

but um again I really I really don't know what a Buddhist I mean it would just say the right things but without any actual Insight backing it up but I mean some people they just might need to hear the right things and uh the Insight behind that may be largely irrelevant so I'll just move on to the next question this is from Conrad and Conrad says what is the Buddhist teaching about

romantic love if it causes a mental
attachment surely it is a cause of doko
but on the other hand in theory one
could be deeply in love whilst
practicing mental detachment
is it possible to be married in the the
life of a householder and also realize
Nirvana

perhaps more difficult if one wants to
realize Nirvana

is celibacy always necessary

well I mean there are people who are
claimed to be enlightened that are
married like there's uh what Eckhart
Tolle is married I guess

was a Layman who was married he ran a

little stall in India selling cigarettes
and stuff

um

but I mean with regard to Orthodox
theravada Buddhism yeah romantic love is
not recommended by ancient Indian early
Buddhism and that's largely
I mean not entirely but largely because
like early theravada or even
pre-theravada Buddhism it was very much
a product of ancient Indian culture
going all the way back to the Indus
Valley Civilization where it was sort of
a pessimistic approach to this world
where this world or samsara is a bad
place you want to just break all
attachments and just get out of it

and early Buddhism teaches that Mahayana Buddhism was becoming more liberal I guess and uh like um what is it the uh we molecuity near desha Sutra where we molecuity is this very Advanced practically enlightened bodhisattva who not only is married and has kids but he's he's going to like brothels and in taverns and stuff um but in early Buddhism like romantic love is called Pema or or sneha it's not the word meta which is more of a spiritual love like in like in Christianity you've got the three kinds of Love you've got arrows phyllos and agape and Agape is the spiritual love

Eros is the sexual romantic kind of love
and uh philos is you know Brotherly Love
kind of a thing or a philosophical love
um in Buddhism there's different kinds
of Love also you know meta is more of a
spiritual we're just kind of a
friendliness you know this kind of
wishing others well the kind of a thing
and like the the erotic kind of stuff is
is called Pema or or sneha
and I think there's other words for it
too

um but the main thing is

um with regard to the negative aspect of
it is first of all

um I mean it does increase desire and it
increases pleasure which means you're

going to have more of the opposite to to
contend with and so it's more
distractions and more ups and downs you
know you're not getting the smooth
sailing that a monk is shooting for
so there is that also I mean you're
interacting with another person who is
not entirely under your control of
course who may be unpredictable and I
mean that can be a positive or A
negative because I mean if a lot of a
lot of monks like hermit types like I
was for a long time is you just don't
learn how to deal with other humans you
don't learn how to deal with you know
somebody just throwing curveballs at you

or knuckleballs or whatever

and um you might need more personal
interaction and feedback just just kind
of keep you from drifting off into just
weird eccentricities and so forth or
just becoming really dysfunctional
so I think with a lot of people

um

like Spiritual Development while having
a romantic relationship is probably the
most realistic and it's most conducive
to just living a natural healthy life
um I think they've done studies that
show that people that are in a
relationship tend to live longer than
people who are solitary that kind of a
thing

but early Indian Buddhism largely

because

of where it arose and the cultural

conditioning

um

it was it takes a pretty dim view of

romantic love although

um

romantic love does have its good points

and its bad points from a spiritual

point of view

thank you

so let's see see if I'm answering the

whole question here

oh if it causes mental attachment surely

it is the cause of Duca but on the other

hand in theory one could be deeply in
love whilst practicing mental Detachment
yeah in theory but

um as a general rule a woman wants you
to be attached to her

um if you're just completely detached
where

um you know she could come and go and
you don't care or she could be faithful
or Unfaithful and you don't care I mean
maybe if she's like really into
spiritual practice also but probably not
even then that she might be cool with
that

so

is it possible to be married and live
the life of a householder and also

realize Nirvana I think it is possible
it's probably more difficult it's more
challenging you know it's it's a more a
more advanced setting to the video game
um

just because one of the purposes of
being a monk is to remove
distractions and to just remove anything
unnecessary to strip down your life and
simplify it radically so that you can
just dedicate yourself full time to uh
cultivating wisdom and so forth whereas
in a relationship it's more like
um you're just surfing the waves and the
opportunities for wisdom are just kind
of sometimes just being hurled at you

but uh I have chosen to be in a romantic relationship and uh I have no complaints so I'll just move on to the next question

and this is from CEO vacch and sipad zidana and I'm getting much better at pronouncing this I think I mean maybe I'm pronouncing it wrong but at least it's rolling off the tongue more easily so

Vox and sipad zidana says

now Gardena is very concerned with non-dualism and non-differentiation of things but the suttony patasana is a chapter of dualities that kind of goes completely opposite to this thinking such as the duality of

suffering and the cessation of suffering
what are your thoughts on this subject
of Duality versus non-duality well in
order to communicate
you have to use dualism and if you're
communicating to lay people or people
that just aren't very highly
evolved yet or they haven't cultivated
more subtle like meditative States yet
um you have to be more dualistic you
know talk about this is good and this is
bad you should do the good and avoid the
bad and that's that's very dualistic and
then as you get more into more and more
refined States then that kind of Fades
out also you should bear in mind that

the sutas were never intended to be like
an integrated all of it mutually
agreeing with each other kind of a kind
of a thing it's like the Buddha would be
talking to one person and you know kind
of using their own
attitude as a way of teaching them
kind of reflecting things back to them
just kind of speaking their own lingo
and then with somebody else who might
have a very different problem he'll be
he'll be talking something different
and it was the commentarial tradition
that tried to integrate everything so
that you know they have to make it all
like be compatible with each other and
it's not necessarily the case like ajan

chai used to say if if he sees someone straying too far to the left he'll tell them to go right and if he sees somebody straying too far to the right he'll tell him to go left but he hasn't just contradicted himself by telling two people opposite things it's just that what you tell one person is suited to their own predicament and then what you tell the next person is suited to their own predicament and some people are just very much in Duality so you'd use a more dualistic way of teaching them um and then there's one sutra that's this statement or this question here by CEO of action

um it's the Pura beta suta in the Sudani
Pata which

um

it's it's got a lot of opposites paired
opposites it's like the suit that is
largely based on pairs of opposites but
they're canceling each other out
so you've got this and this and then
they cancel each other out and then this
and this and they cancel each other out
so

that might be another

uh sort of dharmic way

of just bringing up Duality

um as a kind of skillful means to get
past duality

so I think I'll just move on to the next

question by CEO Vox and sipad zidana
and he says you said Sankara is a thrown
together term but to me it seems to make
sense as a category the will is heavily
influenced directly by habits and
emotions and hence why they are all
grouped under mental formations
whereas Pleasure and Pain are deeper
motivators of behavior and can't be
changed what do you think well I don't
think that some cars necessarily A
thrown together term I think I said it's
one of the most ambiguous terms because
it has so many different definitions
like Sankara can just mean thing I mean
it can mean anything that is conditioned

like uh in the three marks of existence
you've got Sankara duka Sabe
Sankara Anita and then you've got Subway
senkara duka anything that's conditioned
is conducive to suffering or is
unsatisfying and it is
you know any condition thing is
uh impermanent you know inconstant but
means that it's not just with regard to
conditioned things but there's nothing
at all including nibana that is the self
so

um some Kara can have different meanings
in different contexts that's that's
mainly what I was saying
um

but let's see let's get a little farther

here with CEO of action sipot Zeta not
here the will is heavily influenced
directly by habits and emotions and
hence why they are all grouped under
mental formations well that's not
necessarily the case I mean sometimes
they're all grouped under Sankara but
then again like in the five condas
um

like uh Sonia Kanda or perception
technically that's a Sankara also but it
got separated out on its own
so let's see pleasure and painter deeper
motivators of behavior and can't be
changed well the main motivator of
behavior is really it's going to be your

perception and your reactions to what
you experience I mean like in in the
dependent core Rising the 12 nidana
Theory there you got weight enough or or
feeling leads to not or craving and that
is the link that's supposed to be broken
by the Dharma practitioner where you
have the feeling and then I mean just
having this feeling I mean it's it's
sort of
and like morally neutral it's just what
you how you react to it is going to be
moral or immoral or or whatever
and that's going to be what how you get
off the wheel if you ever do
the wheel of something sorrow I should
say

so

um yeah according to the the old five
condo theory of you know what we what we
are composed of is five condos Sankara
there mainly means will
so it's uh perception has been
differentiated from Sankara and it
mainly means will although the abhidham
scholars May argue that they'll say that
there's like 50 or 51 other mental
states included

so

I think I should just move on to the
next question
before uh I get so confused that
everyone else is confused also so CEO of

actions next question is

foreign which is a good suda by the way

the Buddha says that a foolish person

has views such as quote the self and the

cosmos are one and the same unquote

which is rejecting the Hindu idea of the

Brahman how is nirvana different than

this idea especially when it referred to

as empty and non-self as well

the main difference is that Brahman is

reified as an existent state

at least um

uh in I mean the language frames it that

way I mean it's it's very difficult to

talk about something that is

unconditioned because just by calling it

it you've just turned it into a worldly

samsaric thing

but Buddhism was much more reluctant to
reify the absolute

so Nirvana or Nirvana is just completely
off the scale you cannot really say

anything about it I mean just calling it
it you've already just turned it into

something else it's not nibana anymore

so yeah it's the upanishads saying that

um you know calling Ultimate Reality

Brahman or near Guna Brahman which is

Ultimate Reality which has no

discernible characteristics

and then identifying that with the Atman

or the self

um

I mean that's it's coming fairly close to what Buddhism teaches except that Buddhism is just sort of instead of saying you know something exists or the ultimate exists they're just saying as little as possible because nothing you can say about is going to be valid to say it exists is invalid to say that it doesn't exist is invalid to say that it does and doesn't exist isn't valid to say that it neither exists nor doesn't exist is invalid you just can't talk about it and so Buddha was more interested in just teaching people how to get there rather than explaining where they're trying to go

I mean you can use certain simple terms
you have to use some kind of terms I
mean why would anybody want to attain
Nirvana if I mean the person who's
teaching you how to get there is just
refusing to say anything at all about it
so I mean you can say it's the cessation
of suffering or it's the cessation of
greed hate and delusion or or whatever
it is the escape from all suffering the
escape from samsara or whatever but
um as a general rule in Buddhism you
don't reify it nibana is completely off
the scale and the main purpose of dhamma
is not to describe the goal it's just to
tell you how to get to the goal and a

good example of of this that I've I've
spoken of more than once is let's say
there's somebody comes up to you you
know there's some sort of hillbilly
they've never had vanilla before in
their life so they ask you what does
vanilla taste like

and I mean you can stand there and
explain and explain and explain how
vanilla tastes and they're still going
to be completely clueless

in fact I mean if you've never tasted
vanilla yourself you can read book after
book after book you can do chemical
analyzes you can do all this stuff you
still don't know what vanilla tastes
like unless you mean you're having like

artificial vanilla flavoring or
something but that's cheating
so if someone wants to know what vanilla
tastes like
then the best thing they can do is just
find some vanilla and taste it so
somebody comes up to you and asks you
what vanilla tastes like I mean you can
just waste your time trying to explain
it to them which I mean it's just gonna
be futile or you can just tell them how
to get some vanilla and to taste it for
themselves and that's pretty much what
Buddhism is doing and it's keeping the
attempted descriptions of nibbana down
to an absolute minimum and even then

it's really

um is should not be considered a thing

or an it or even a state I mean it's

just completely off the scale and what

the upanishads are trying to describe is

essentially the same thing in my opinion

I think that the the sages who wrote who

composed the upanishads and the sages

who composed the most profound Buddhist

texts were attempting to explain the

same thing from two different

perspectives

so at least there is that

and so I guess I should just move on to

the next question also from CEO of

action

and that's it right here nagarjuna says

that things are empty because they only exist due to causes and links the idea of dependent origination and emptiness together however if Nirvana is unconditioned and without a cause then how can it also be empty in without self well it's a different kind of emptiness ah or you can just say that I mean going with nagarjuna I mean Nirvana is is like the underlying reality of samsara and that's when the Mahayana Buddhists say that ultimately Nirvana and samsara are the same that Nirvana would be sort of like the essence of samsara and some sorrow would be like the the apparent form of Nirvana

but uh

yeah I mean now Gardena says that things are empty because they only exist due to causes but I mean he's not even saying that they exist he's it's like they they appear to exist they seem to exist due to seeming causes

and uh

and Link and he links the idea of dependent origination and emptiness together yeah so Emptiness is just emptiness of any self essence and that's true of Nirvana because he's dealing with reality I mean reality is devoid of self-essence so that applies to Nirvana and like I already said earlier is

which means it's not just worldly things
it's not just some sort of phenomena that
are not self it's absolutely anything
including Irena is without self
so I'll just move on to the next
question

from CEO of action

and he says I assume it to be

it's not really a girl name pretty sure
in the subbasa vasuta the Buddha rejects
the idea of self no self self feeling
there is no self and no self feeling
like a self

and then he's got a quote

when they attend improperly in this way
one of the six the following six views

arises in them and is taken as a genuine
fact the view myself exists in an
absolute sense The View myself does not
exist in an absolute sense The View I
perceive the self with the self The View
I perceive what is not self with the
self The View I perceive the self with
what is not self unquote I always
thought that he was saying there is no
self and it only feels like we have a
self but based on this suta that is
incorrect can you please explain the
nuances of this issue well in all of
these it's like it's it's still I mean
mine so it's like
you know my The View myself does not
exist in an absolute sense I mean it's

still referring to myself I mean it's
still referring to a me even though it's
like this me that I identify with is not
absolutely real you know I perceive what
is not self self it's still I am

perceiving it

so

any kind of trying to sneak in an eye or
a me in through the back door

um

is is out

what let's see

yeah I mean self and no self I mean you

can you you could argue that it's sort

of like it's all invalid like nibana

itself where you know if if the Atman

and Brahman are the same for the in the
upanishads

then I mean it would be kind of the same
in Buddhism where the instead of Brahman
you've got nibana or Nirvana and you
can't really say that it exists or
doesn't exist I mean it's just you don't
reify it and then by the same token the
self would have to be the same way
so

this is it is kind of a tough question
it's a subtle question very nuanced as
CEO Vox and sipad zidana himself
uh States here

but uh

yeah I mean just even referring to the
cell just thinking about

um you know what am I really that kind
of a thing is is discouraged in in
teravana Buddhism I mean you just
shouldn't even go there

so we'll just move on to uh CEO of
action cpad zidane's next question and
hopefully I didn't uh bungle that last
one too badly

in the Chula

in the Chula malukya suta and other
places why did the Buddha refuse to
answer the question whether the self and
the body are one and the same the idea
of the five contests clearly rejects
that idea so it's confusing I heard some
other people say it was actually asking

about the Mind Body problem and the body refusing to answer that but I don't know in another video you say many Buddhist Traditions have different views on this like sir boss Ivana both are real and different yoga Chara only mine exists majamika neither exist Etc if you interpret this question like that seems these schools have places their bets on something the Buddha refused to answer well one thing that should be born in mind is

the Buddha said there's no self but with regard to these questions that he wouldn't answer the word that sometimes referred to as self or soul is Jiva it's not Atta so it's a different word and

Jiva literally means life

so it could be that they're simply

referring to the life force you know

it's the life force the same as the body

or the the life is your life the same as

your body or are different from the body

um I mean it could be interpreted that

way I've I've interpreted that way

sometimes just as a way of trying to

wrap my head around it

um

but it really is two different words

that are both being translated as self

or soul

uh usually it's odd time you know anata

there is no self but in these questions

the Buddha wouldn't answer it's Jiva
which means life although it is true
that some groups like The jains use the
word Jiva as soul
so it's kind of kind of ambiguous and
it's it could be that um this is another
case of
um different sutas coming from you know
different perspectives possibly
different ancient monasteries or some
such where
um you know it's not all of a piece it's
not all perfectly logically consistent
because uh or partly because the boot is
just talking to different people and
they've got their own issues and he's
sort of tailoring what he's saying to to

suit their own predicament

uh let's see

self in the body are one in the same

yeah

yeah that's that's generally those

that's that's my best answer so I better

just move on to the next question here

also this is CEO of

actiona's last question here

can you explain how to practice sense

restraint I never seen anyone explain it

without saying it is different than just

being an avoidant prude and moving on I

don't understand how we practice sense

restraint well the way I was taught if

you're practicing sense restraint it

doesn't mean you're just like closing
your eyes and putting your hands over
your ears and just not sensing anything
it means that if you hear something you
just hear it as sound you're not like
trying to identify it or categorize it
you know there's a dog barking out the
window then you just hear it as sound
you know you're just experiencing the
sensation of of the sound you know
interacting with your ear in your
auditory lobes and all that
um you're not thinking oh that's a dog
barking out there and it's the same way
with like your visual field you're just
experiencing as
as close to unprocessed data as you can

you know you're not slapping labels onto
it you're not thinking about it you're
not spinning off with trains of
Association it just is what it is you're
not attributing significance to it
you're experiencing it fully you know
you're still hearing you're still seeing
and everything but you're not
interpreting what you are sensing
you know it's just sound it's just
vision and smell it's it's taste it's
it's touch whatever
so that's how you practice Center strain
it's you just
you experience the senses but you're not
just running with it you're not like

spinning off into chains of Association
and that sort of thing

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Raphael 46.

also known as Rafi 46.

in Raphael 46 says did you know that the
founder of Tibetan galug School Jade
song Kappa recommended tantric sex with
12 year old girls the Dalai Lama is part
of the school the goal is to attain
nibana with this ritual of course most
western Buddhists are unaware of this
yeah and when I first learned about this
it was a long time ago I read about it
in a ROM dos book where he's saying that
these girls are trained from childhood
to be able to have sex with no emotional

involvement whatsoever so that the whole thing is done as a kind of meditation where the man is lying motionless trying not to do anything and the girl is over the top of him and she's like been trained not to be emotionally involved and

I just I just read about it as just this tantric practice I don't think that it's considered to be essential to Enlightenment to do this kind of stuff and I assume it's relatively rare um it might be accepted as you know a possible way of practicing but whether the Dalai Lama himself has done this sort of thing I have no idea

and uh I mean it's the way Tantra works
Tantra believes that we are in the Kali
Yuga that we are in the spiritual Dark
Age it's not even possible to be like a
fully perfected Saint and so you have to
use like the corruption of the world as
Grist for the mill so to speak and so
they eat meat and they they drink
alcohol and you know they do these
things that generally would be
considered

um Bad Karma or demeritorious and
they're trying to

like purify it just by having as pure of
mental States as they can manage while
doing these things and of course most
people will fail miserably and they just

wallow in it

and it is dangerous and I think they
fully admit that it's it's difficult to
do and it's very dangerous but um they
do it anyway

so I think I'll just move on to Raphael
46's uh next question

and that is have you studied see on
Buddhism or ever had contact with Korean
monks the Theon Buddhism is that like
the the Korean version of Zen because
I'm I remember reading a book by a
Korean monk who had seon in his name
so I mean it could it be just this
tradition that he founded
in which case

I read the book

and uh all that I remember

is him referring to

um

like

subatomic particles as microscopic but

we can just attribute that to his lack

of uh Mastery of the English language I

suppose

um

but

um

yeah Korean Zen I don't know much about

I haven't really studied it I have

interacted with one Korean monk

especially I spent two months at pandita

Rama back around 1997. the winter of

97.98 if I remember correctly and there was this

um Mahayana Buddhist monk a Korean wearing the gray pajamas and uh

he and I talked a little bit I mean we both had a great respect for nagarjuna for example he was saying that uh some Korean monks consider not Guardian to be like a second Buddha

um and he was

I mean he would have like these uh what's the word

oh what's that art

it's like you're doing like Salvador Dali just uh

the word is escaping me but I mean he was having these weird dream like meditations and he was considered to be a really good meditator by upandita who was the doing the meditation interviews and I'd just be having these completely pedestrian kind of kind of meditation experiences and and upandita in the Seattle was not impressed at all and then this Korean monk would be talking about how he's just floating on air and seeing molecules and germs and everything is breaking up into atoms and just going on and on about this kind of stuff and um I mean he could just sit like a statue for like three hours in the in

the full Lotus position too

so but I I do think that

um

yeah he was just a very Faith oriented I

think

and uh

yeah

I really I really can't uh can't judge

his meditation experiences though but he

was the only Korean monk that I ever

really got to know

and uh well it's regard to see on

Buddhism I really I really can't I

really can't say so I'll just move on to

the next question from uh Raphael 46.

and he says recently saw a video of a

monk from Sri Lanka punching a
missionary in the face what consequences
does this monk face and what happens if
he keeps doing this acting does not
regret it well this is kind of weird
it's

um

it is against the rules for a monk to
punch a layperson in the face
but it's a minor rule it's just a Duke
and ice like the the lowest level of
offense like to punch another Monk
that's a pachidia offense which is sort
of mid-level with regard to the severity
of of the breaking the rules but to
punch a layperson is is just a very
minor offense which is kind of strange

but

um does like the heaviness of the karma
doesn't necessarily match up with the
heaviness of the rule

so you can do some things that

um you know are trivial and break a
relatively serious rule like building a

Hut that's that's not the correct size
it's too big or something you know you

haven't necessarily done anything evil

but I mean that's a relatively serious
rule whereas like punching away person

in the nose

um could be uh considered a much worse
thing to do but it's it's just a very

minor rule to break

but um what consequences this monk face
and what happens if he keeps doing this
act and does not regret it well I mean
you're making the karma I mean maybe in
a maybe in the future he's going to get
punched in the face and that'll that'll
like pay off the karmic debt

um

and he keeps doing this act and does not
regret it well I mean the regret is
irrelevant

um from the point of view of terrible
Buddhism regret or Kucha is always bad
karma so

um I mean you can admit that you did
something wrong
and try to rectify it you know try to do

better in the future that's good
but uh regretting having a guilty
conscience that kind of a thing it's
just it just makes things worse
so I mean he's just gonna keep making
Karma which who presumably would be
about the same severity as what he's
dishing out
so he might get beaten up pretty good if
he just keeps going around uh punching
missionaries
and uh
yeah I mean if he doesn't have any kind
of uh
um if he doesn't acknowledge that he's
done anything wrong then yeah he's I

don't think he's he's gonna make very
much progress

so we'll just move on to Raphael 46's
next question

what do you think about Buddha Dasa I
like how he wanted to make a lay people
into monks he once said that ideally a
couple should stay celibate during their
marriage

well Buddha Dasa if this is the Buddha
Dasa that

um I'm aware of is as a tie on John and
I really don't know much about Tai
anjons a very few I mean I've read the
biography of ajan man for example I know
you know a certain amount About anjan
Cha because he's the most famous of all

the Thai monks

um

but Buddha Dasa yeah it's it's possible
that an Australian monk very long ago
gave me a book of Buddha dasa's sermons
I think maybe it was Buddha Dasa just as
a joke just to show how time monks
really don't know Paulie and they use
the the words wrong and stuff
but um aside from that I really don't
know much about on John Buddha Dasa if
this is even the same Buddha Dasa that
I'm thinking of

um

wanting to make lay people in the monks
I don't I don't even understand that

sounds kind of protestant to me and then
he once said that ideally a couple
should stay celibate during their
marriage that would be like orthodox
theravada

um like I'm not talking dika was a
Buddhist Saint and he was married but I
think he was celibate
and his wife presumably was as well
so yeah this is kind of an easy question
for me to answer because I can just say
I don't know because I'm really not
familiar with him
so I'll just move on to Raphael 46's
next question
does a Buddhist create Bad Karma by
following the five precepts only out of

selfishness rather than idealism he does these things only because he wants to enjoy his next life not because he cares about others or understands the compassion Behind These precepts well I mean Buddhist ethics are so finely tuned that it's virtually impossible to get only good karma when you do something that

um you know as long as you even think that you are doing it then there's delusion involved in fact and as long as you're not enlightened yet there's going to be delusion involved which is going to be a certain amount of Bad Karma mixed in

so does a Buddhist create Bad Karma by following the five precepts only out of selfishness

um yeah he's I mean hopefully he'll be making more Good Karma than bad

so I mean he'll be making good karma too and just depending on how corrupt and depraved the mental states are will determine you know how much Good Karma how much Bad Karma is is going into the mix

so

yeah it may be that one starts off

um like doing meritorious Deeds just

because one wants to get into the goal

is Golden Palace with the 500 Celestial

nymphs in heaven after one dies and then

gradually as one progresses because I mean every act has its results you know if you're if you're living a moral life and meditating even though if originally is for bad reasons your wisdom is going to progress and so your reasons are gradually going to progress also and get better

so yeah let's just hope that he's doing it in such a way that at least he's making good more Good Karma than bad and so I'll move on to Raphael 46's next question

and that is as follows some monks who handle money justify this by saying that only handling gold is bad but not paper

money what is your opinion on this well
the monks who say that are just ignorant
of the rule because the rule is uh
jatarupa rajata which it's it means gold
or silver and then at least I mean in
the the poly itself it it explains when
it when it explains the rule it's
referring to anything that can be used
as currency

so I mean like copper pennies it's still
money it's not gold or silver but it's
still money paper money is still money
um

there are some monks in modern times who
um they'll say well like a debit card or
something isn't exactly money
and uh you know like the there's some

other person or they use a credit card and you've got some other person who is paying off the bills so that the monk technically isn't handling money but still I mean that's it's just kind of cheating and like even some relatively strict monks their their habits and they're like signing checks or endorsing checks you know they're just endorsing the back but even so the check itself says pay to the order to and so they're like endorsing in order to do something with money and that's that's just as much against the rules as handling the money themselves there are more and more subtle waves of

using money without actually handling it
nowadays but

the best bet of a monk who really wants
to be strict is just have nothing to do
it I've read three different
explanations of the Money Rules by three
different Western monks and all of them
were essentially writing you know how
how much can a monk handle money without
actually breaking the rules you know
like where where exactly where is the
line he can just get right up to it
before he stops and not break the rule
because people I mean not handling money
can be very inconvenient for a monk I
have to admit especially if you're on
like going through foreign airports and

stuff

let's see

so yeah I mean that's just a bogus

argument I mean it says quite clearly in

the poly that anything that can be used

as money counts as gold and silver

so we'll just move on to Raphael 46's

next question

which is should the rule of sleeping

only four hours a night be changed if

you sleep for less than six hours you

can face multiple repercussions like

cardiovascular problems depression and

weight and gain well there is no rule

saying that you're only allowed to sleep

for four hours it's just recommended

that a monk would sleep only one watch
of the night the night is divided up
into three watches you know for a second
and third and a monk should sleep only
one of those and if you assume that you
know half of a 24-hour period is night
then that comes out to four hours
and um

yeah I mean here's if you sleep for less
than six hours you can face multiple
repercussions like cardiovascular
problem yeah you sit in the full Lotus
for hours you can get problems with that
too you stay celibate you get problems
with that you know just just being a
monk like like I was saying earlier it
can cause like strain and imbalances in

your body and that's just the price that
you pay

to to live this spiritual lifestyle

um but I have found that uh if you're
doing intensive meditation you just
don't need as much sleep

so it's sort of like some of the the
functions of sleep are also fulfilled
just through sitting there in a in a
chilled out older state but not thinking
it's like maybe your brain just has to
take some kind of a break from certain
kinds of thinking I have I have read
that your mind is actually more active
when you're asleep especially when
you're dreaming than when you're awake

but um

yeah there is no rule uh needs to be

changed and uh

yeah some some people just don't need

much sleep I've I've been a real

sleepyhead before I was a monk house I

used to say if I didn't get nine hours

sleep in the morning or if I didn't get

nine hours sleep I'd be a bear in the

morning

so but then I was trying to get down but

really only one month in my entire life

as especially as a monk but I mean my

entire life uh was I able to average

less than four hours sleep per night for

an entire month

and I was that was some of the most

intense intensive meditation I'd ever
done and I really didn't need much more
sleep than that but if I wasn't
meditating I could just could not do it
it was only when my meditation was going
good and I was doing it intensively that
I could get by on on four hours or less
of sleep per night for a prolonged
period

so we'll just move on to Raphael 46's
last question

and that is

doesn't monk have to cover both of his
shoulders when he gets in contact with
laypeople

no he doesn't he only has to cover both

shoulders when he's in public which means if he is in a public place like in a village or in a town but inside the monastery he can interact with laypeople and have one shoulder uncovered or even not wearing up a robe at all he can have both shoulders and his chest and his belly uncovered if he's out in the forest or he's inside the monastery but if he's outside the monster in a public place you know among the houses then he has to keep both shoulders covered so I'll just move on to the next question which is from Diane and Diane says is it inevitable that everyone has to suffer uh yeah although some people suffer more than others I

mean some people are fortunate and their suffering is you know their their dog dies or you know they they get catch a cold you know they get a toothache when they're 16.

you know it's like you can have relatively you can have a happy healthy family and everything but still there's there's going to be stuff that happens and happiness and unhappiness are just two sides of the same coin now they're going to balance out in the long run so if you have pleasure that you don't detach from you enjoy you know the way dinner tastes and so forth it's going to be balanced out by by something else

maybe a little bit indigestion or just
being hungry maybe you're hungry before
then and you weren't Satisfied by being
hungry you know or or whatever so
there's always going to be a balance of
suffering and and like pleasure and
displeasure and as I say monks try to go
just go the route of neutrality and try
to keep both to a minimum
but yeah it's
the the first Noble Truth of Buddhism is
that if you exist you're going to suffer
even the the Gods in heaven are
experiencing some dukkha or or
unhappiness
for various reasons it's just more
subtle there

but I mean it's it's just a matter of degree I mean there are some people in this world that are already in a Hell Realm

and then there are some people that are relatively fortunate you know they're sort of like low-level small G gods but it is true that nobody is perfectly happy and there's nothing in the entire universe that has the ability to uh completely satisfy us

and in fact you can say that it's like this Restless dissatisfaction that is just pushing us through life from one moment to the next so I'll just move on to the next

question which is the last question and
this is from Aaron

and Irene says

what is the Buddhist attitude towards
the whole right-wing Alpha Chad bro
mimetic movement

which includes bodybuilding superficial
self-improvement self-responsibility
Etc is there a dharmic way of going
about it or is it just Macho narcissism
well

let's see here the Buddhist attitude
towards the whole right wing Alpha
chadbro mimetic movement

um yeah I mean it's outward acts are
karmically neutral for the most part
it's just the mental states that

accompany

um the acts that really are making the
karma and determining like the uh the
ethical value positive or negative of
the of the behavior

and so

like

bodybuilding working out in the gym I
mean if you're just doing it to look
buff to attract women or just to to
bolster your ego then yeah that's that
would be uh demerit or or Bad Karma
mixed in if you're doing it just for the
sake of being healthy and strong then
even that is going to have a little bit
of Bad Karma just the delusion of I

exist you know I mean mind kind of stuff

um

self-responsibility I mean that's in

itself is uh I think that would be a

virtuous uh attitude

self-responsibility although again some

people go about it skillfully other

people go about it unskillfully you know

self-responsibility if you just like

jacked up with you know hatred of of

like the Invaders trying to destroy our

country and the the corrupt rulers who

are trying to destroy the civilization

and all this on and on and on if you're

just sort of chronically angry or

hateful

then you're going to be motivated by

anger and hate and it's just gonna
Poison the Well essentially and it is
true I've noticed a lot of just
hard right Wingers tend to be sort of
dour angry people without much sense of
humor and not all of them hopefully not
most of them but it's like some of the
real radical right-wingers so
they do have a certain negativity just
kind of built in and they may justify
the negativity as uh necessary or
appropriate or something but from the
Buddhist point of view negativity is
still negativity

um

let's see

so is there a dharmic way of going about
it or is it just modular narcissism yeah
there's there's a dharmic way of going
about it if you're just doing it out of
a sense of of Duty and and just
you know desire for health and strength
and and just being an upstanding person
who is able to do his part in society
um being self-sufficient and so forth
that's fine

so yeah it depends on the the mental
states of the individual who's doing the
thing

and that is was the last question

and I kind of answered them more quickly
than usual usually this thing stretches
out to like two hours

so yeah I was speedy

and if you have any questions you're
very welcome to ask just leave them in
the comments below

or if you have access to my subscribe
Star channel you can ask them there if
you have access to the Discord server
you can ask them there and uh hit like
if you please subscribe if you haven't
already look at the URL links below
including the books that I have written
and be happy

hello and welcome to episode 43 of
question and answer I am your host Ponyo
bossa and I have to admit I'm a little
bit tired this evening at the time of
recording this it's a Friday night and
I've worked hard today and I worked hard
all week and also my sweetheart has been
gone so I've got extra duties like
taking care of the animals and and
keeping the house sort of kind of clean
and I've got to clean it more before I
go to pick her up tomorrow
just uh just because
I'm up for this I'm I'm ready I'm
kind of Pumped sort of to answer these
questions and we've got as usual the

plethora of good questions and so
um without any further ado I'm going to
start answering questions because that's
why I'm here is to answer these
questions

and the first question is from Austin
and Austin says

how often should I show up to the
monastery to support the local monks
they are unable to specify what they
need and how often they need it so I'm
not exactly sure how I can be the best
of help

well

um how often should you show up to the
monastery to support the local monks I
think one factor is just how much free

time do you have another factor is how many supporters do they have if they've got lots of supporters they may need less help than if they only have a few supporters

um

with regard to this part they are unable to specify what they need and how often they need it actually they're not unable to specify unless they just don't speak your language or something

um if you give them permission to ask then then they can ask so if you haven't already you can go to any or all of the monks and say you know venerable sir if you need anything just let me know or if

you want to specify just so that they're not asking for video games and stuff you just say if you need any of the four requisites you know which is let's see shelter food clothing and Medicine you know if you need any any of the four requisites just let me know I'll do what I can unless maybe they they want like a great big shelter with like a pavilion or something

um

so yeah I mean you go there when you can I suppose I mean when the the spirit moves you to go to the monastery and uh yeah just make an invitation to them and uh just ask I mean they would know better than I do like how often they

need food offered like do they cook
their own food like a lot of Asian monks
do especially

um or I mean is there like a roster of
people coming in the morning to offer
food I mean you might sign up for some
day that you're free every week or
something

um

but but yeah I mean just uh it's
probably better to consult with them if
they speak English if they don't you're
kind of screwed I guess you can still
get an interpreter

so uh

yeah I mean every time you go if you if

you're going with good intentions you're
making offerings to the Sangha you're
making Merit you know you're Gathering
up Treasures in Heaven so

yeah it's good to do that

and I'm going to have a beverage

a man cannot live by bread alone there
must also be a beverage

and now I'll move on to Austin's second
question

which is

if we apply the first precept to our
prehistoric ancestors who lived a
hunting and killing lifestyle it may
seem as though they would be in a state
of suffering in hell until their karma
is exhausted what do you think

well

I there's a good chance that they live somewhat of a short brutish life and it took I mean it took many thousands of years before people were able to progress beyond the hunting and Gathering lifestyle

so

yeah it's sort of like uh it takes a long time for an animal very long time like according to the sutas you know if you're stuck in the animal realm you're just stuck there you tend to be stuck there for a long time just because they have little opportunity to uh cultivate dhamma

and then maybe someone similar if
um for hunter gatherers who are killing
regularly although again it's
um I do think that in Ancient India or
in India even today they may put a
little bit too much negative emphasis on
killing not because it's good to kill or
you ought to kill but I mean
going to hell for for picking lice out
of your baby's hair or something yeah I
think that's that's pushing it a bit
I don't think there are very many people
who go to hell for slapping mosquitoes
for example
so I mean it's just it's more likely
that if you do killing as a human I mean
unless you're like a serial killer or or

like uh some dictator who's perpetrating
a genocide or something you know if
you're

farmer killing chickens or you know you
hunt sometimes or you go fishing I mean
if you're not doing it out of just love
for killing

you know you just get a rush from
killing something I mean that's not good
but I mean you're going to get bad karma
for that but it's just not really uh
like

or an equitable balance between killing
a rabbit with a rifle and then burning
in hell for a zillion gajillion years
it's just I mean it's it's not like a

fair balance

so

yeah I think they had more difficulty

probably a bit more violence a little

bit uh harsher existence in certain ways

but um

yeah I think a lot of them would

cultivate a kind of stoic Equanimity

when they're hunting and a lot of

hunter-gatherer societies you know

they'll even be like thanking the animal

you know apologizing for having to kill

it and so forth and I mean they're still

killing but at least they're sort of

mitigating factors that made it not

quite so bloodthirsty

probably they get more Bad Karma through

inter-tribal Warfare or some such and
there apparently was a lot of that I
think one of the main causes of death in
uh you know Stone Age societies was
inter-tribal Warfare

so I think I'll just move on to the next
question also from Austin and this one's
kind of interesting I don't think
anyone's asked me this one before is the
dhamma eternal

and that's kind of a trick question
um according to abhidham according to
kind of Buddhism in general the only
thing that really is eternal is nibana
or Nirvana
that has no beginning and no end but

there's a kind of Quasi

eternity that some things have like I

mean you could argue that two plus two

will always equal four or

maybe just going with a equals a

um

if a is greater than B and B is greater

than C then a is greater than C

you know I say B is greater than C

if a is greater than C and if a is

greater than B and B is greater than C

then a is greater than C

yeah that's what I was trying to say I

can't remember if I said that the first

time but things like that I mean you can

say that they're Eternal truths and even

in in in the dhamma you can find you

know like in the dhamapada

um you know they'll say you know this is

neutral truth it's like you know hatred

is not quenched by hatred hatred is

quenched by non-hatred this is an

eternal truth I'm pretty sure that's uh

in the domapana and

it's Eternal in the sense that so long

as you have a conscious being

like thinking of it or acknowledging it

then you know now it's it's true a

zillion years from now it's true a

zillion years ago it's true

so it's kind of Eternal in in the sense

of you know one plus one equals two is

eternal but only it only exists when

somebody is thinking it because
otherwise you just have formless void
so in a sense dhamma is eternal but it's
a kind of punctuated
eternity it's you know it exists and
then it doesn't exist and exists it
doesn't exist but because it exists only
when you've got a sentient mind like
perceiving it
but since samsara apparently is uh
beginningless and endless
um it's samsara is kind of Eternal too
but it's it's constantly changing and
this dhamma is also kind of changing
because it's going to be different in
the mind of one being than in the mind
of another being you know there'll be

different perspectives and different
ways of thinking in different languages
and so forth

so I mean it's a difficult question it's
in a way it is and in a way it isn't

the Nirvana aspect of dhamma is eternal
just because nibana or Nirvana it has no
beginning and no end it's unconditioned
it's off the charts off the scale

but dhamma would be Eternal the way
you know a equals a is eternal or
um

you know just some kind of
some kind of law that you can't you
can't understand how it couldn't always
be true even if there's nobody nobody's

thinking it but it only really exists if
somebody's thinking

so I think I'll just move on to Austin's
next question

and this one is

uh well I'll just read it unfortunately

my relationship brings me suffering but

I know I'll suffer more if I let her go

what should I do well the fact of the

matter is in in Buddhist philosophy

everything brings you suffering

now it's just everything in the world is

unsatisfying to some degree

so yeah your relationship brings you

suffering and not having a relationship

will also bring you suffering and so the

thing to do

is uh learn to deal with the situation
with Equanimity as well as you can
and I'm you know if you've got a
relationship with somebody who's like
screaming at you and throwing dishes at
you or something then yeah that's that's
advanced level that's that's the
challenge level

um

but I mean if you know that you'll
suffer more without her than with her
then I suppose you just stay with her
and use your relationship as a kind of
spiritual practice you know it's just
part of your your path and you're
learning to love her as perfectly as you

can and that's part of your spiritual
practice because only an enlightened
being can love perfectly
like total unconditional love I'm pretty
sure only an enlightened being can do
that
so just uh
practice love
as a spiritual practice
that would be my advice I mean I really
I don't know the lady you know so I
really can't go into specifics because I
don't know the specifics about the
relationship
but that would be my general advice
and so I'll move on to Austin's next
question

how often did you meditate before you
became a monk

well I mean

it depends it was like I gradually
meditated more and more the closer I got
to becoming a monk of course when I
originally I didn't meditate at all I
didn't start meditating until I was in
high school I think and I was really
crappy at meditating and then I'd
meditate maybe 20 minutes or 30 minutes
in the morning before I'd go to school
and mainly is just sort of riding the
bucking bronco of my own
mind just going everywhere and trying to
like get it back to om because that's

how I was meditating back at the time I was inspired to meditate from Reading ROM Das books and he was more of a Hindu than a Buddhist so I started off with om um then I stopped probably in college I didn't meditate at all

um

and then in my mid-20s as I was getting more and more serious about like entering the monastery and really practicing dhamma

like conscientiously

I started meditating again and I was I was really bad at it it was just be a um I have a timer set for 30 minutes or I'd have an inset stick and I wouldn't stop meditating until the insects ins

the insect incense stick would was
burned through and yeah it was it was a
struggle and it wasn't until I started
like actually going to monasteries just
to kind of check out what monsters were
like in doing Retreats there that I
started meditating several hours a day
but before that it was pretty sketchy it
was

no more than an hour per day maybe half
an hour

but it wasn't until I became a monk that
I really became just like a really
sincere just full blast practitioner
and being a monk I mean that's one
reason why one becomes a monk is because

you're able to meditate all the time or
most of the time if you're a monk

so I'll just move on to Austin's next
question

and this is uh somewhat of a complicated
one

can you explain the nuances and
differences between weipasana samata
samadhi and anapana and how should we
incorporate these into our meditation
foreign

well

we pass enough it has two different
meanings it has like the vulgar meaning
that it has acquired in like modern
terrible Buddhism not just in in the
west but also in some place like Burma

so we pass enough literally it means
insight

and it's something that happens to you
it's like it's like a flash of wisdom
that occurs

um but in common parlance it means
mindfulness meditation and if you
practice mindfulness meditation then
sometimes Insight can arise and so for
some reason just the mindfulness
meditation or Sati batana meditation has
been called wipasana

um more than anything else in the West
is a different kind of meditation it's
not

um predominantly mindfulness meditation

it's the cultivation of Janna or at
least moving in the direction of Janna
so it's

still in your mind like in mindfulness
meditation

excuse me my eyes itching

in mindfulness meditation

um

you got a moving Target you know

whatever arises you notice you note that

whereas in somehow meditation you tend

to avoid letting your mind follow these

other things you just keep it on the

primary object

and if it starts to stray you know your

knee itches or you hear a strange noise

or your mind just starts to wander as

soon as you notice you just bring it
right back to the primary object and
that is that's more like someone tall
meditation it's like your your mind is
becoming quieter and more still and more
simple it becomes one pointed so to
speak

so those are the two main kinds of
meditation in Buddhism

you've got mindfulness meditation
sometimes called vipassana and then
you've got like some Modi oriented
meditation

or you're concentrating your mind on on
one thing

so that leads us to the next term that

Austin wants defined or explain and that
is samadhi and almost always samadhi is
translated as concentration

so it's keeping your mind focused on
whatever you want it focused on without
any kind of

straying or wandering or like blurriness
or or semi-conscious attention that kind
of a thing you want just focused
attention on something

um until you get into really advanced
like Jonah States in which

um your mind is more expanded and you're
not focused on one thing it's just I
mean the one thing may be like like

Infinite Space or infinite consciousness
and so in that case samadhi is really

just distilling and sort of the the
clarifying of your mind

you know as your mind becomes very
simple and pure and clear and that also
is a kind of smarty but that's more
advanced than just keeping your mind
focused on on one thing that's a more uh
Elementary kind of of samani

and uh the last term that uh Austin once
explained here is anapana and anapana
literally means in-breath out breath

Hana or pran Prana in in Sanskrit

um

it's um it's breath

and so anupama is a meditation form in
which you are observing your breath

generally you're observing

um the breath as it touches uh around

your nostrils and that is what you focus

your concentration on Focus your mind on

that's your primary object in your

meditation

and it can be a kind of mindfulness

meditation where if there's nothing more

obvious to to note you just go back to

the breath or it can be a samadhi kind

of a meditation that can lead to Jonah

in a way she just keep your you just

observe the the breath or

um not so much observing the breath or

like when I did anapalam uh it wouldn't

be so much observing the breath I

wouldn't be thinking breathing in

breathing out like like probably most
people who do anapana do it's more of
just observing the sensation of touch
around the nostril so it'd be
um this sort of a way to not just uh
um mindfulness of the of the feeling
um this the contact because
um according to
like standard terravonna Buddhist
philosophy breathing in and breathing
out are not ultimate realities but
waiting out we're feeling is so you're
closer to Ultimate Reality if you're
doing anapana by just being aware of the
sensation of touch then you are if
you're like imagining like the air going

into your body in fact some some kinds
of anapana you're you're like Imagining
the air going through your nose and it's
spreading out through your whole body
which is uh not very realistic it's it's
really not

um correct

like human physiology or I don't know
what the word is I guess it's physiology
right no

there's some word for like how your body
works and it's that's not how it works I
mean the breath is not spreading all
through your body unless you're
imagining you know like the the
hemoglobin getting oxygenated and going
through all your cells and

yeah

probably better off just just observing
the sensation of touch

so how should we incorporate these into
our meditation it depends on what kind
of meditation you're doing

um it is good to be conversant in the
different terms like the the different
jargon of meditation especially Buddhist
Meditation so it's good to know what we
possible are

but uh how you incorporate that into
your meditation depends on how you
meditate you know what your goals are
what you're trying to accomplish
um and so on

so I think I'll just move on to the next question here

and this was uh I mean all these questions from Austin were not just one after another it's he's asked these questions over a course of several days and so this question is not that the same on the same day as all the other questions

and this question is or it's sort of a question

I was involved in a serious car crash today and it made me ponder about the negative Karma that could have led to such an event

it then struck me how we as humans tend to attribute everything that happens to

us as something unique or beyond the
natural course of events I wonder if my
situation is simply a natural
coincidence or if there is a deeper
Force at work here governed by the law
of karma well according to orthodox
tirovada
every single Sensation that you
experience is the fruition of karma
so the whole world that you are living
in is is heavily conditioned by Karma
everything that happens to you that's
positive or negative and I think an
abhidham a scholar once told me the even
neutral events
um you know just the touch of your cloth

your clothing against your skin or
something that even that is the fruition
of karma to some degree and karma is a
mental state so in a sense we're we're
like dreaming the world we're in We're
Dreaming our reality and

I mean if you're really in a you're
having a dream at night you're asleep
you're having a dream it all seems real
and I mean you're still Bound by certain
laws not nearly so much as as when
you're awake

but still I mean there is a certain
structure that you're pretty much stuck
in and you got the monster chasing you
through the the syrup and you can't run
fast because the syrup is slowing you

down

um I mean you don't really have

conscious control over that it's just I

mean at the same time though you're

creating it

and being in a waking dream like like

this I suppose is similar to that it's

like a higher level you know there's

more structure to it

but it's it's similar

so

yeah it's like will will is Karma and uh

yeah we're sort of driving our our

vehicle through through the cosmos and

I mean most of us just aren't very good

drivers and we really don't understand

just how profoundly we are creating the world that we're living in

so yeah it's according to Buddhist

philosophy when you got in a car crash

um I'm sorry I got in the car crash but

uh yeah it was it was your own mental

stage that condition that it was your

own Karma that reached fruition now who

knows what the action was or the group

of actions that kind of planted that

seed for that to happen

but um yeah we're sort of creating this

stuff and uh I mean it's not entirely

bad in a way you're paying debts when

something bad happens to you I remember

reading that Ramana maharshi was a Hindu

by the way he uh

uh what's the word

he admonished his fault one of his
followers and that when he prayed he was
only thanking God for the good things
and he said you should thank God for the
bad things too because it's when bad
things happen to you that you get the
wake-up calls and it I mean if
everything good happens it's sort of
like you're in heaven and everything's
so nice you're not really improving
you know you're not really motivated to
change or improve whereas when bad
things are happening and it causes you
to be unhappy then it can inspire you to
try to kind of fix your own mind at

least so that these things don't make
you so unhappy

so let's see

uh again I'm sorry about the car crash

but I think I'm going to move on to

Austin's next question

and that is how do you differentiate the
real from the imaginary

and that's an interesting question and

there's two different ways you can go

about this one is the ultimately real

from anything that isn't ultimately real

so it's like how do you differentiate

what is ultimate truth from what is just

uh conventional truth or samsaric Maya

or something and that's fairly easy

because

um I mean I'm kind of a heretic I'm not
like an abidama scholar here

but

ultimate truth is is essentially nibana

I mean the highest reality is nibano

and uh so anything that involves

perception is not it

I mean you gotta go completely Beyond

perception and just go into just like

pure Consciousness although

if you get to the level of pure

Consciousness then you go off the scale

it's paradoxical

so yeah I mean so at one level you can

say the difference between the real and

the imaginary is the difference between

nibana and samsara

but it could be and some Mahayana

schools go into this in some depth that

what Austin here means is

you're differentiating like conventional

truths from conventional untruth

or you know what can be considered true

in a samsaraic context from just your

own imagination and the way you

differentiate that

would be

something would be true if it doesn't

contradict all the other stuff you

consider to be true

at least that's that's like the the way

of really separating the goats from the

Sheep

so if something is
just merely imaginary it's not going to
be integrated into everything else that
you consider to be true it's just going
to be sort of a one-off like a just a
spin-off of something
and it's not going to be integrated into
all the other truths that you consider
to be true
and that's uh
I'm sort of getting into like
there was a hegelian philosopher like
around the early 20th century FH Bradley
who is one of my favorite Western
philosophers and he had this idea of the
coherence theory of Truth which is

essentially what I said it's like
something is true if and only if it is
in agreement with
everything else that you consider to be
true

so I'll just move on to Austin's last
question

and he's been he's been asking some
interesting questions here does
dependent origination instantiate
infinite regression

well

in a way it does

because samsara is condition I mean

samsara is like the result of dependent
origination or dependent uh co-arising
as I usually call it

um

so in a way I mean there is an infinite regress if you care to to just go back it's sort of like in science you can see you can regress back to the Big Bang or or whatever

um but this goes Buddhist philosophy there is no big bang or or or there's a sequence of Big Bangs you know it's like the the universe expands and then contracts and is destroyed and then a new universe expands and contracts and is destroyed and then a new universe and that just goes on forever and ever that's that's the Buddhist explanation

um

but in a sense dependent co-rising

um

I mean you can you don't have to regress

it into Infinity I mean you can

if you're able to

but

um I mean you can just see dependent

code Rising like in the present moment

so it works in the present moment even

if you don't regress back into Infinity

uh and I've talked quite a lot about

dependent co-rising and it's very

difficult to talk about and uh it might

be a major digression of me wallowing

through trying to explain something that

even the Buddha was in despair of trying

to explain according to tradition

so I think I'll just uh move on to the
next question from

hereward the wake

I think is is how you pronounce this
name here were the wake

and he says proclus who lived from 412
to 485 A.D the best known of the
neoplatonists after plotinus apparently
believed that all things interpenetrate
all other things this seems to me to be
a kind of approximation of
interdependent origination or at least
it is very similar to the metaphor of
indra's net used in Hawaiian Buddhism
bearing in mind that in the indo-greek
kingdoms coins were minted showing

Buddha on one side and a Greek god on
the other is it possible today to be
syncretistic neoplatonist and Buddhist
yeah it's certainly possible

um

I think the hard part is just getting
neoplatonism on like you know on track
and like into a

um like

a functional

belief system

other than just sort of uh

uh like an idiosyncrasy of one

individual in society or in another one

kind of 20 miles away and another one 50
miles away

um

but yeah I mean it's certainly possible
I think the hard part would be getting
the neoplatonism going

but I I think uh yeah I think it would
be interesting to see what would happen
in western

civilization if the the last Pagan
emperor of Rome uh Julian the apostate
hadn't died so quickly I mean he was
Emperor for just a couple years and then
he got killed

um but he was trying to establish
neoplatonism as like the religion I mean
a kind of modified neoplatonism he was
taking neoplatonism and injecting it
into

um like classical Roman paganism as a way of making it more wise and more structure to it less dependent on silly poets and coming up with all these ridiculous stories

um

yeah we might be

I mean it'd be interesting just to see what would happen I'm kind of sorry it didn't happen

um but yeah I don't see any reason at all is why it couldn't be

um combined with Buddhism Buddhism combines with other systems fairly well obviously in China it was combining with Taoism

although there are some people a few

people who say that taoism itself was uh
like allowed to
was really just a kind of
semi-mythological Buddha that I mean he
was

it was sort of the Buddha sort of
um distorted into another a Chinese
person named laosu but ultimately it's
it was going back to the Buddha but um I
digress

so yeah the easy answer to that question
is uh sure I don't see why neoplatonism
and Buddhism couldn't be combined to
some degree and they are to some degree
in in agreement on certain things
so I'll just move on to the next

question and this is I assume it's from
someone called William

although they've spelled their name

u-i-l-i-u-mu William

says

did the Greek sculptors work from the
description of the Buddha in Buddhist
scriptures

um

to some degree I suppose I mean they had
him wearing monks robes

and there were some really famous

um Hellenistic sculptures or images of
the Buddha when he was going through the
uh

uh dokaracharya where he was torturing
himself and starving himself so there's

some like Hellenistic Greek style
statues even if it was they weren't
carved by Greeks it was in the Greek
style of

the Buddha just as it may see just Skin
and Bones sitting in meditation with you
know sunken in eye sockets and

everything so they knew something about
the Buddha but the texts themselves

don't go into details on what the Buddha
look like Anyway other than just he was
tall he had sort of

golden colored skin you know he was
Majestic looking

there are some really strange details in
uh the marks of the great man where he

supposedly had 40 teeth and so forth
that need not be taken seriously because
it wouldn't even be possible for one
person to have all the 32 marks that are
described

but um I think the Greek sculptors
mainly we're just modifying Apollo the
god Apollo

that the Buddha was

um

carved or portrayed in the style of the
god Apollo which included a kind of top
knot like an aristocratic top-not that
eventually got turned into that weird
lump on the top of the Buddha's head or
so I have read

but I mean they knew some of the details

they knew what Monk's robes looked like
and so forth so they had him looking
like a Buddhist monk except with the
hair when Buddhist monks aren't supposed
to have you know long head hair like
most Buddha statues have even though the
booty himself was a monk who shaved his
head

ah

so the answer to that one is yes and no
and I'll just move on to the next

question this is from rui

and rui says do you think that first
genre can be accessed through thought
I.E through a correct and clear
intellection well any kind of thought

with like individual words or symbols
hooking up in sequence like there are
kinds of of the 40
standard types of meditation
that are taught in or or like mentioned
at least in books like the wisudi manga
which is a kind of meditation manual
um there are some that involve just
thinking you know you're like reflection
upon the virtues of the Buddha
reflection upon Heaven reflection upon
the Devas reflection upon your own Merit
that kind of a thing and none of them
lead to Jonah because you can't really
get into John if you're thinking in
sentences
I mean there can be a certain amount of

of thought going but it might be very
simple like a mantra kind of a thing
or it could be non-verbal thought
but if you're thinking in sentences
which I assume is what rui is is is
um alluding to here
then uh like intellection yeah that you
you can only get as far as
um upachara samadi or access
concentration this is according to like
the commentarial tradition
take it or leave it like the wisudi Maga
itself will say that any kind of
meditation that involves you thinking in
sentences you know you're thinking
you know the way most people think you

know like some a kind of running
monologue kind of a thing then the
farthest you can get is not Jonna but uh
access concentration or upachara samadhi
which is like one step before you get
into Jonna so if you're gonna attain
Jonna you're eventually gonna have to
stop thinking in sentences while you're
meditating

so I think I'll just move on to the next
question here and this is from Jeffrey
who's one of the only people who asks
questions on bit shoot

and Jeffrey says

does Buddhism have an observation of a
sky clock

and a sky clock I assume he's referring

to being able to tell what time it is by
looking at the position of the sun in
the sky I've read survival manuals or
like you know like Army survival manuals
that give you instructions how to do
that and Buddhism really doesn't do that
I mean there's really only two times
that a monk has to know that is dawn in
midday
and

I mean you could call determining when
the sun is at its highest point in the
sky a kind of crude sky clock

um maybe

in some monasteries or some monks who
just use a kind of sundial

you know you can you can make a sundial
fairly easily

um and it the purpose of it is partly
just so you'll know exactly when noon is
when midday is

so it's possible

um that a lot of like ancient Buddhists
had something like that just so they
wouldn't they'd be sure of not breaking
the rule against eating after midday and
with regard to Dawn that's easy it's
according to the commentarial tradition
when you can see the lines in the palm
of your hand when you're at arm's length
then it's light enough to be called Dawn
so

you can see like the the lifeline and

the heart line and all that you can see
those lines at arm's length then it's
daytime it's the day has begun although
it's not a very good way of determining
daytime because if it's cloudy it might
go on might occur half an hour later
than it did the day before

um usually as a monk I would just when
you can detect light in the sky coming
from the east or the southeast south or
east by Southeast then

yeah it's the day has started

um Buddhism does have a sky calendar and
I've I've written in some detail about
that or you can tell what time of the
year it is by the position of the full

moon among the the constellations of the
the ecliptic what in the west is called
the Zodiac but it's they they have
different constellations in Ancient
India and they had 27 of them
instead of 12.

so

um really the only time that a monkman
needs to know and I don't think in
Ancient India they had a concept of
hours you know like you know what a
clock is it

the only time that a monk really needs
to know is when is Dawn and when is noon
because a monk is only allowed to eat
food between Dawn and noon he's not
allowed to go for alms around Before

Dawn

so those are really the two times a mom
needs to know one is just from the if
it's light or if it's still dark and
how ancient monks
were sure

that the sun hadn't reached the highest
point in the sky yet I'm really not sure
because

I don't remember reading anything in the
text about that

there's a famous

kind of statue of upagupta you can you
can find them in Burma even though UPA
Gupta was uh he's more of a Mahayana
type

monk I don't think he was terrawotten
but um it's if you've ever seen like an
altar a statue of a monk sitting with
his monk Bull in his lap and he's kind
of looking up like this
I've been told that what he was doing he
was looking in the sky to see if it was
Midday yet so he'd know to stop eating
but this is kind of strange
so yeah the only sky clock there would
be is just somehow knowing when it's
exactly midday because it's against the
rules for a monk to eat after midday
and I assume
um either monks would just eat
relatively early in the morning so
they'd be sure that it wasn't midday yet

or else they'd have some kind of uh
Sundial set up just so that when the the
shadow reached a certain point you knew
it was Midday

and it's fairly easy to make those

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from

a challah I think a-c-a-l-a

-la or akala

and achala I think

says

during the chanting of paritas we often

invite the Devas and seek their

protection how did the Devas provide us

their protection when we invoke them or

how can one know that one has the

protection of Devas is there a specific practice to be able to contact and see the Earthly Davis

um I chanted parita a lot and at the beginning there is an invocation where you're inviting the Devas to come and listen to the dhamma

but

it wasn't so much to seek their protection I mean it was just sort of an act of respect I think

um

yeah I'm not aware of any paritas that are really invoking Davis for the purpose of getting favors from the Davis um to some degree just by sending meta to the Devas and then they're going to

send it back to some degree

um you know obviously if you if you're nice to someone they're more likely to be nice back to you and that works for uh Davis too apparently

so how did the Davis provide provide us their protection when we invoke them

um

I mean there's sort of like a powerful benefactor to some degree

um

it's it's very limited in Buddhism it's prayer is really not encouraged in

Buddhism in fact the Buddha kind of made fun of it in at least one suit that I can think of

um

it's more of a Hindu thing I think and

obviously more of a Christian thing

so

how do the Davis provide us their

protection

well

who knows

frankly

um

yeah I mean there's all sorts of things

they can do they can warn you you know

you just get like this premonition this

feeling

or you know they can turn away some sort

of danger maybe danger you're not even

aware of maybe they're helping you

without even realizing it

so how can one know that one has the protection of Davis I don't think there's any way to be absolutely sure I mean you could have a Deva come and talk to you and say that he's protecting you in such and such ways but

um yeah it could be a hallucination of some kind of strange Vision that you had under a strange mental state or something

so let's see how come when no one has the protection of Davis I mean I've often felt in my life that I have had someone looking after me

but again it's just a feeling there's no

way I could prove it

and then finally is there a specific
practice to be able to contact and see
the Earthly Davis

there may very well be although I don't
know what it is it's really like in
terrible out of Buddhism they really
discourage this kind of thing because
the Devas aren't going to liberate you
the Davis aren't going to send you to
heaven

you know they're just sort of like

I don't know powerful friends if you're
lucky

so

so yeah and and terrible Buddhism one is
certainly not encouraged to rely on

Davis or to invoke David's for the
purpose of getting favors from them or
or any kind of praying or making
sacrifices to the Devas
um it's it's really that's really not
what terrible Buddhism is all about
although as I say at the beginning of of
the chanting of Puritas often especially
in in Burma I don't know how it's done
in Thailand or Sri Lanka or such places
but what invokes the Dave is just
um out of respect to have them come and
listen to the novel
so I'll just move on to achala's second
question
in the edipada wibanga suta which is

samyutinikaya 5120 the Buddha describes
the eight Supernatural or the Eight
supernormal Powers what are your
thoughts on this especially the one that
states

quote with his hand he touches and
strokes even the Sun and Moon unquote is
this genuine teaching of the Buddha how
should we evaluate such discourses since
I myself have no such supernormal Powers
should I accept them to be true

well as a junior monk I have to admit I
had some problems with this list of the
eight super normal Powers it's not just
in that one suit it can be found
throughout the departica at least in the
winnia and sutanda

um and yeah and this with his hand he
touches and strokes the Sun and Moon I
mean

yeah there's some commentarial
explanation of that where he's just like
materializing a replica

and touching that or some such but it
really I don't know I I kind of doubt
that the Buddha would would have taught
that the other super normal Powers

um they involve like Clairvoyance the
Divine eye deep

clear audience or the Divine ear Divas
Sota

um

one interesting one is walking on water

or like going through walls or like
swimming through the the ground as
though as water that kind of a thing
another one is creating like replicas of
yourself

um another one is recalling your past
lives in other words seeing into the
minds of others and then finally the the
last and eighth one I'm pretty sure is
just the the awareness of Liberation
that you've become enlightened and that
is the ultimate supernormal power is is
just breaking through the veil and
seeing Ultimate Reality

um so yeah I mean everything

I mean if you have doubts about it

then yeah I mean you shouldn't just try

to force yourself to believe it because
there is quite a lot of stuff in the
polytext that I just could never believe
like when the Buddha was born
you know he just walks towards the east
I think with a Lotus Blossom coming up
under his feet so he wouldn't have to
touch the ground and then he makes this
grandiose statement you know there's no
one greater than me this is my final
lifetime you know my final existence and
and then apparently after that he just
goes back to being a relatively normal
baby
okay there's all kinds of weird stuff in
the text there's the fire breathing

dragons and the talking animals and so forth

um

so I think it's possible that this would go into that category or it may be that there was just a standard list from before Buddha's time of you know the eight paranormal powers and it just got incorporated into Buddhism possibly by the Buddha himself it's really hard to say in cases like this although yeah

I've never had any use for the uh

touching and stroking the Sun and Moon

I wouldn't I wouldn't even really want to touch the sun to tell you the truth

so let's see since I myself have no such supernormal Powers should I accept them

to be true well some supernormal powers
or psychic abilities

yeah it's I'm it's pretty likely to say
the least that they are true although
stroking the Sun and Moon may not be one
of them

but

like knowing the minds of others a
certain amount of telekinesis that kind
of a thing yeah I've I've got no problem
with that

so yeah you have to just rely on your
own your own intuition your own best
judgment on cases like this

but I myself also as a junior among as
soon as I read that it's like how the

heck anyone gonna be touching the Sun
and Moon

so I'll just move on to the next

question and this is from CEO of ox and

cpat zidana and I don't know if I'm

pronouncing it correctly but at least

I'm pronouncing it with a certain amount
of facility now

and see of actions says

there are some self-proclaimed arohans

on the internet that claim to be

enlightened but admit still having

sexual desire and being frustrated at

times this is because they claim the

traditional 10 Fetter models are wrong

and that since all schools really teach

the same thing their permanent

experience of boundless non-dual
Consciousness is proof of their
Enlightenment with some claiming that
being free from desires like sex or
patriarchal values of ancient Indian
culture I know you have also said that
you think the upanishadic sages have
reached the same stage as as Nirvana but
based on what these internet arahans are
saying it seems you don't even need to
remove the three poisons which is greed
hate and delusion or attraction aversion
and delusion to achieve their ultimate
state
to me it just seems like that they
couldn't reach up towards the status of

our heart so they brought the status of
Aura haunt and down towards them I say
this because there are some Hindu
Traditions Jane's six Etc
seeks six

that also have similar kinds of poisons
that need to be removed completely and
have agreed with this standard for over
thousands of years so it's not just some
made up standard Patriarchs made like
these people claim what are your
thoughts on this whole thing what kind
of state do you think these people have
attained that they experience boundless
non-dual Consciousness but still have
many of the Fetters in all three poisons
well this is really uh

there's there's a spectrum
and at one end you've got Traditions
like terravada Buddhism that say in
order to become enlightened you have to
be a perfect saint
you can't have any bad thoughts you
can't do any bad things you have to be a
saint before you can become enlightened
then at the other end of the spectrum
you've got like the Krishna murdies
who are saying I mean it doesn't even
matter
because it's like
you're detached from from this meat
puppet anyway this isn't you you realize
this isn't you it can just do whatever

it wants and that isn't you

ah so

it really is kind of a paradox really

um I do think that to some degree being

saintly

facilitates enlightenment

and that may be why so many Traditions

like strenuously encourage saintliness

if you want to become enlightened

because it greatly improves your odds of

becoming enlightened whereas in the West

it seems like most people who become

enlightened or have their Awakening

experiences they it just happens

accidentally you know they have some

sort of Calamity that just slams them

out of a rut and so

um you know they're not as saintly as as
somebody like in the east

who who has just gone through this
strenuous self-discipline and
purification and so forth

um I can see that there's a possibility
of

like becoming enlightened I mean
obviously not everyone has to be at the
same level

in order to become enlightened like in
in Buddhism terrible Buddhism especially
some people have to get all the way up
to Fourth genre in order to become
enlightened other people don't have to
get Janna at all apparently or

um you know they don't have to get very
Advanced mental States and then they
become like a dry visioned or a hot that
doesn't have any psychic powers or or so
forth

so

yeah this is uh this is kind of a sticky
one and I I have to admit that over the
years I've gradually had more and more
appreciation for someone like

krishnamurti

And he supposedly was enlightened or he
had attained something

um but at the same time he was he was
not a saint and like he was messing
around with he had like an adulterous
relationship going with his the wife of

his personal secretary and so forth

so

I do think that saintliness is conducive
it increases your odds of becoming
enlightened but it may be that you could
still become enlightened without being a
saint that uh I mean there there may be
enlightened Rascals in this world like
neem karoli Baba is one of my favorites
he was a rascal but the thing is that
like to have all three poisons which is
you know greed hate and delusion or
attraction aversion stupidity
that I mean if you get to a certain
level where you're just detached from
the body

you detach from the the mind body system
I mean you just know it isn't you and it
just it's just nature taking its course
then I can see the possibility of that
although in all probability these most
of these internet arohans are
technically sociopaths you know they're
like con men or else they're just
conning themselves you know everyone who
does intensive practice for years
you know they don't they want to believe
that they've attained something
and especially if they're making money
from having attained something then
serious then they're going to be making
excuses for why it is that they're still
you know horny and and so forth

so I guess my best explanation

is that saintliness or like moral

self-restraint

it increases your odds just like being a

monk increases your odds

um

but that it may not be necessary to be

an absolute Saint like in terrible

Buddhism it's saying that you know a

fully enlightened being can't do this

can't do that he can't tell a lie for

example

and it's like uh

it seems like an awful lot of things

that a liberated being can't do

and um yeah so I'm I'm definitely

skeptical of the idea that you have to
be an absolutely perfect Saint in order
to become a lion

um this where I'm going to scroll up
here a little bit

oh yeah their permanent experience of
boundless non-dual Consciousness yeah
I'm skeptical of that

that I mean if they're functioning
it's possible I suppose but I think a
lot of them a lot of these famous people
especially if they're just bragging
about how enlightened they are and
there's quite a few of those the ones
that are bragging about how enlightened
they are I

I would be skeptical I mean I just think

you know they're they're calling
somebody possibly just themselves
but it is uh

yeah it's a tricky one but I I kind of
lean towards

the con men in a sense

um the ancient Traditions definitely
they are based on self-purification and
you know strict morality and uh and
that's good I mean it increases your
odds but I think it is possible that
someone who isn't a fully enlightened
saint

can have something happens that just
slams them just it just like detaches
them from the whole system

and uh you know so the Mind Body uh
system is uh still in a relatively crude
state but somehow they've managed it
anyway

that is a possibility I have to admit
that I do consider that to be possible
so I think uh

I should uh stop wading through this one
and uh get to the next question by CEO
of action and sipad zidana
and this is another kind of longish one
here

he says I have heard lay bresington say
that he thinks the four path model
originates from udana 2-1

and uh I have to admit I didn't read I
didn't refresh my memory by reading who

Donna 2-1 before raw before going on
this uh episode of q a
um but he's got quotes here I've heard
Lord bresington say that he thinks the
four Pals model originates through Donna
and the four path model I assume he's
referring to here is the four stages of
sainthood you know you got the soda Pawn
on the sake dagami the anagami and the
araha

so quote Blissful is Detachment for one
who is content who has heard the dhamma
who sees unquote this part is stream
entry of where one sees the
unconditioned directly has contentment
because of having absolute Faith from

seeing directly and Detachment is even more General than rights and rituals

quote Blissful is non-affliction with regard for the world restraint for living beings unquote this part is sakitagami you would have desires and ill will but you will always practice restraint in how you act towards people and the world quote Blissful is dispassion with regard for the world the overcoming of sensuality unquote this describes the onigami who is free from all sins desire I guess ill will isn't really mentioned in this description quote but the subduing of the conceit I am that is truly the Supreme Bliss unquote this describes an araha who sees

non-self do you think that this skeleton
of the later 10 Federer four path model
directly from the sutras is something you
would agree with

um

I think he's asking me if I agree with
Lee bresington's Theory the whole idea
of the four stages of sainthood plus
maybe the ten Fetters the list of ten
Fetters comes from this one Sutton udana
2-1

and I think it may be that this was like
an early stage in the development of the
ideas

but

I think there may be even earlier stages

like there are several sutas at the
beginning of a little-known text called
IDI Utica which is in the
um

where the term anagami apparently means
arahan and literally an anagami is one
who does not return
so obviously if you become enlightened
you don't return to samsara kind of a
thing

and soda upon us

I really think that originally a
sodapana was not necessarily a saint at
all not necessarily anyone who had seen
Ultimate Reality like for example
there's a strange vinya rule an obscure
one

it's one of the the four Pati desania
rules where monks are not allowed to ask
for too much stuff from a family of soda
panels

and apparently what it means there is is
that they're like new converts that
they're like uh Born Again Buddhist is
it's like they're full of Faith they're
very enthusiastic and if monks just keep
going and asking them for stuff they'll
just give away everything and create
hardships for themselves so there's a
rule against that

um I'm not sure how monks would be able
to know whether an entire family had
seen a glimpse of of nibana or not

so I think that the terms themselves
sakuragami apparently isn't mentioned in
any of the really old archaic texts
um so I do think that the the four
stages of sainthood
um it evolved over time
and I don't think that it's it goes all
the way back to the Buddha or if it did
it was in a different form I mean it has
evolved
with regard to the 10 Fetters I I really
am not I've never been into the whole
list of you know the five of these and
the Seven of those and the the 37 of the
other things like I've never had any
interest in that it's just
it's counter-intuitive me I don't think

that dhamma really works that way I mean
you're not going to become enlightened
by systematizing lists of numbered words
or concepts

some people are really into it you know
like some engineer types in the west one
of the reasons why they like dhamma

is it so systematic you know it's got
all these lists that you can memorize
but for me it's just counterintuitive

that if you're practicing dhamma you're
trying to get towards more and more this
Clarity and simplicity and

silence

or at least Detachment from the noise

so

yeah lay bresington I mean he does have
some interesting ideas

um

but yeah I don't think that the the the
four stages of of sainthood that their
ultimate origin comes from that one suta
and the udana that that may be like a
relatively early stage in the evolution
trying to get the concepts together in
some coherent form

so I think I'll just move on to the next
question from

which I don't even have to read anymore
the other day at work and just it was
almost like a mantra just this this
weird name going over and over in my
head

which may be the plan I don't know
anyway the next question is
in an older video you said you can't
help someone if they don't want to quit
unless they have a change of perception
how could this knowledge be used to
change bad habits and addictions
willingly that we do want to quit such
as internet addiction or or there are
other ways these bad habits can be
removed if we want them to be well the
thing is if you're addicted to something
you don't completely want to stop doing
it it may be that you know it's like
some heavy drinker you know he's lost
his job and his wife is leaving him and

his friends are starting to avoid him
and everything and
he's he thinks I'm gonna have to stop
drinking I'm gonna turn over a new Leaf
I'm gonna be a good boy and then
I mean it works for a while until
finally he starts getting the urge and
then he wants to drink again
and it's the same way with internet like
internet addiction I mean obviously it's
not a physical addiction it's people do
it because they want to keep doing it
and it's like Mary Baker Eddy like the
founder of Christian Science
she said that it's easier to cure
someone of cancer than it is to cure
them of a bad habit because they

sincerely wholeheartedly want to get rid of the cancer but the bad habit it's it's a it's a habit because they like it and they're attached to it and they want to keep doing it it may be that they're of two minds you know a lot of the time they're thinking I really shouldn't do this anymore this is bad for me but then you know after a while they start getting the urge again and they want to do it and so you have to really have a change in perception so that you realize that it's just not serving you and the the like probably when uh CEO of actions I saw the older

video when I was talking about it it may be when I was the one where I was talking about my own father who tried to stop smoking over and over again you know he'd he'd smoke two packs a day and then he'd stop smoking go cold turkey then after a while he'd start smoking a pipe a little bit or chewing a little tobacco and then within a month or two he'd be back to two packs a day again until his legs started turning black and

he went to the doctor and the doctor told him because he had injured that leg before and and there was a significant capillary damage in that leg the the cat the like the damaged capillaries were

they were getting clogged with tar and
uh he had two choices he could stop
smoking or he could have his leg
amputated and that caused a radical
change in perception so that kind of
whenever you get the urge I mean the
urge came came back but then he'd just
think of his leg getting amputated and
it wasn't so bad or another possibility
would be let's say that there's some
Psychopathic king or Emperor kidnaps
your daughter and says if you don't
break your bad habit I'm going to
torture your daughter to death well then
all of a sudden
it's easy I mean you're still gonna have

the urges but as soon as the urge arises
you just dismiss it immediately just
nope

and that's that's pretty much what has
to be done in order to break an
addiction you have to get to the point
where when the urge arises you just
dismiss it this nope not gonna happen
but when you're in in two minds about
something

then yeah I mean part of you doesn't
want to do it anymore but it's not like
you wholeheartedly want to stop because
then you'd stop

the reason that you don't stop is
because part of you doesn't want to stop
and so you've got this internal

conflict going on until eventually one
side or the other wins

so let's see

how could this knowledge be used to
change about how it's well I mean you
have to change your perception so you're
gonna have to acquire more knowledge at
the very least about what it is that you
want to stop just study up on the bad
effects of whatever it is that you're
you're toying with uh not doing anymore
and I just at the very least

so I guess I'll just move on to the next
question here

from CEO of action C part zero now I
have trouble getting into samadhi due to

being somewhat overweight when I sit my joints start hurting quickly and when I walk I get exhausted quickly I can't stay in a single posture long enough to build up the momentum to reach any kind of deeper samadhi I was thinking of joining a gym to lose weight but then I think I'm making excuses to not meditate how do you think I should proceed with these circumstance

well

yeah getting into better shape would probably help

but then again I mean if you read yoga books like The Illustrated ones showing that the different postures and so forth a lot of those yogis

um

yeah they're they're pretty portly you
know they they got some weight on them
they got like a punch and everything
it's just that they're they're their
joints are very limber they're very
flexible

and

like doing getting into the full Lotus
position

yeah it's just more a matter of the the
limberness of your tendons than anything
else

so I mean you have to endure a certain
amount of discomfort maybe for a few
years before you can sit comfortably in

the full Lotus position for an hour
straight

but but I mean that's that's one way of
going about it you just have to have
patience and perseverance

um but yeah I mean if if you're so if
you're overweight and out of shape
enough that even to do walking
meditation just slowly walking back and
forth causes exhaustion then yeah you
should probably get into better physical
condition

I would say

oh

so I guess I've answered that question
so we'll just move on to the next one
and Co vac and sipad zidana says in the

sutas it is said that the nibana element without remainder or Pari Nirvana is free of the Aggregates including Consciousness and there are states like nerota samopadi that exists where there is no consciousness and there are also rebirth Realms with no consciousness what is the point of trying to attain Pari Nirvana if it just sounds like a permanent mental death that materialists think will happen anyways whether we are enlightened or not seems like annihilationism with many people performing mental gymnastics of never being a self to deny the difference well the thing is

that when it's referring to
Consciousness generally it's referring
to winyanakanda or the the aggregate of
Consciousness which is one of the five
Aggregates and this
arises only with other mental States
that you can't have when you're Anaconda
without some other mental state like
Sankara Kanda and and sannya Kanda or
perception and just like volition
but
if you get to the state of just formless
consciousness
you get into this paradoxical State I've
already mentioned this where
I mean in a way you have to have
consciousness of something but if you

can just sort of break that rule you
just eliminate all the somethings all
the content

then

what you've done is you've gotten into
this formless state and because it's
formless and infinite I mean you can't
really say it exists or doesn't exist
it's it's like this paradoxical this
enigma

and the

Orthodox position of terrible Buddhism
is that you just can't have that
although there are a few sutas one in
the Deegan see one in the majum in Kaya
I think one in the digha nikaya where

it's referring to nibana itself as
infinite formless consciousness
and I mean the commentaries try to
dance around this they're saying it's
not Nirvana it's it's not nibana it's
just some sort of mental state and it's
associated with meditation I don't
remember the exact details but it's
obviously to me at least a hogwash
explanation that it's pretty clear that
it really is describing or attempting to
describe Nirvana or nimana as infinite
formless consciousness
unmanifested boundless luminous
all-round
and that is
I mean when you get to Nirvana it's just

off the scale it's not in any of the 31
planes of existence it is not some saric
it cannot be contained in a concept
and so you just sort of left the system
and so nerota some optic cessation the
attainment of cessation I think there's
another question about this a little
farther down

um cessation of perception and feeling I
do think there probably still is some
Consciousness there otherwise I mean it
would be a non-state I mean it'd be like
being in a coma I mean what would be the
difference between nerota some updated
only the most advanced Saints can attain
and being in a coma where you're just

brain dead or whatever

yeah I do think that Orthodox tarabada

Buddhist philosophy does have certain
glitches in it certain inconsistencies

that have never been worked out

so I think I'll just move on to the next

question also from CEO of action

and this is an interesting one I like

this one

not that I hate any of the other one's

mind you

he says in an older video you said that

the different theravada Traditions

should just accept one another

because no school

can truly know if their ordination

lineage was broken or not

and the fixation is obsession with
rights and rituals however in another
video

you said that the Mahayana tradition
monastic orders for nuns are not
legitimate because you doubt they
properly had

did the ordination rituals done despite
them following an orthodox and Dharma
Gupta calvinia which is non-mahayana
although closer to servos de Vada than
to teravada from what I remember why do
you think these two things should be
treated differently

okay

so in the one video that he mentions

here I'm pointing out that
especially it's the dhamma you sect of
terravonna Buddhist monasticism in
Thailand that refuses to acknowledge any
other monks as legitimate monks they're
saying only they are real monks because
the others the other sects had
um their the lineage was broken
and if the lineage is broken you know
you've got too many monks that are
parajika you know they've committed some
um some ecclesiastical offense that has
them excommunicated but still they stay
in the Sangha or at least they appear to
stay in the Sangha and they're
conducting ordinations and these
ordinations are just invalid because

it's not they're not being done by real monks

so that's one thing another part here that he's talking about is I'm saying that

um these I mean there have been attempts to revive the bikini order

which is the the order of ordained

Buddhist nuns ironically for the sake of gender equality when the bikuni order

has to follow rules that puts them

definitely below monks and they've got

way stricter rules they have to follow

in most respects and so you don't have

gender equality they're trying to get

gender equality by Reviving an order of

nuns that obviously clearly

discriminates against women

so it's just it's just ridiculous but

anyway one argument that they use for

saying that

um

these bikunis are real bikunis

and and not just they're just starting

in modern times just for the sake of

um you know

political correctness

is that in Korea or Taiwan someplace

like that they had an order of nuns that

were being ordained in accordance with

the ancient some an ancient School of

Buddhism the Dharma guptica

um sect of Buddhism

or the Dharma guptica School of Buddhism
so I mean what's the difference why
should I say
um you know we should just accept the
the existent orders of monks as you know
give them the benefit of the doubt but
not give the benefit of the doubt to the
nuns who supposedly were ordained in
this Dharma guptica tradition in East
Asia somewhere
and the thing is as as he points out
here in the question that you can't
prove that all other
sects of terrible Buddhism other than
the dhamma youth sect in Thailand
are valid you can't prove that

I mean you just can't demonstrate it
but with regard to the uh the nun
ordinations I mean it wouldn't take very
much research to find out if the
ordination procedure is valid or not and
if the ordination procedure is just
blatantly invalid for example they're
you know it's a very corrupt tradition
that's adopted all these Korean or
Taiwanese elements and isn't really a
valid ordination procedure anymore in
accordance with ancient Indian monastic
discipline
then yeah that would settle it I mean
you can just point to that and say
there's the proof
but with regard to like domayute monk

saying that well a thousand years ago

Burmese monks probably

um yeah they they probably were so

corrupt or whatever but they can't they

they can't prove it it's just they want

to believe that you know it's just

probably

and they can't even prove that their own

tradition never had a breaking in the

lineage

but that's just maybes so you're you're

weighing maybes on one hand and like

demonstrable facts on the other and it

wouldn't take that much research to find

out if these Taiwanese nuns or Korean

nuns or wherever they wherever they came

from whether they're ordination
procedure is valid in accordance with
terravonna Buddhist monastic discipline
so that's that's my answer
so I'll just move on to the next
question from covax and C pod zidana
and this also is kind of the long one
that's all right

can you explain the difference between
the first one literally translates to
feeling perception sensation cessation
while neroda samopadi literally
translates to cessation completion
however I see many people translate
nerota samopadi as cessation of
perception and feeling so it is
confusing also in ajan Puna damos

cosmology book there is also a realm you can be reborn in where you have no consciousness that results from certain non-buddhists practicing suppression of Consciousness how are all three of these things different unless one unless this is one of the earlier two I mentioned before well there is a kind of misperception here that uh all right literally means cessation of perception and feeling *nerota samopadi* does not mean complete sensation it means the attainment of cessation *samopady* means attainment

neroda is sensation cessation not sensation cessation

so they're synonyms

are the same it's just this the

attainment of cessation and the sun

Yahweh daita is just specifying that it

is in fact the cessation of perception

and feeling

doesn't say Consciousness though but

that's and we already got into that

so yeah so that's really not not much of

a problem they're they're just

synonymous they're the same thing with

regard to this other this other realm

that is mentioned that was described in

cosmology book

um that's the perceptionless brahmas

and I mean I've had problems with that

this is like

you know when I was a young monk I read
about this and it's like the the
supernormal power of of touching the Sun
it's like why would there be a heaven
realm of perceptionless brahmas where
they're just like statues
they're I mean time doesn't even pass
for them I mean they didn't even know
that they're there
you know it's like no time would pass it
would just be instantaneous they're in
and out even if they were there for
millions of years because there's no
awareness of the passage of time they'd
be like Van Winkle or something
and it just doesn't make any sense to me

why there would be a heaven Realm where
the beings are essentially in comas
I mean they're completely unaware of
anything including the passage of time
so there's no working out of any Karma
at all

and so how are they even going to die I
mean their karma cannot reach fruition
if they don't have a functioning mind
so I just I just really am skeptical of
the very existence

of this this realm of the perceptionless
brahmas where these these gods are
essentially just statues of God standing
around in some heaven and they're
completely unaware of even being there
so with regard to the three

daitany Rhoda and he wrote a samapri are
the same and this perceptionless Brahma
State I I really am skeptical of it
um I'm not sure what kind of
um

meditation the the Hindu swamis would be
doing that would the land themselves
there unless they're just going into
like complete

like such a deep trance state that I
mean there's pretty much mimicking a
coma

but I don't know how they get into
heaven for mimicking Comas

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Rick

and Rick says

what are your thoughts feelings opinions

on the dhamapada

well the Donald Potter is probably the

best known tarabada Buddhist text

and also it's relatively late like in uh

the book uh well studies in the origins

of Buddhism on it's it's a book trying

to investigate the probable Origins what

the earliest Buddhism was like and it's

going through all the texts and the

double part is is a late text I mean

it's like hundreds of years after the

time of the Buddha and one of the

reasons that they may have come to this

conclusion

is that a lot of the verses are in verse

forms that weren't used in the Buddhist time but gained the popularity hundreds of years later

just the the rhyme it's not rhyming but it's like the uh the schemes of the long and short syllables the meter

that kind of thing

but even though it's uh it's a

collection of aphorisms you know each each verse for the most part is can be taken by itself and there have been

times when before I'd go to sleep I just read a few verses from the Dom Apollo and then go to sleep

um I mean you can just read them at

random there's no sequence really except

you know a little bit sometimes there's
a like a little group of verses that
kind of go together

but

um

it's probably aphorisms that uh were
well known and just got collected
together

into into this book

you might I mean it's good to read

I don't think it it accurately

represents what the earliest Buddhism
was like but that's not necessarily
important to most people

so

yeah and then there was I think there's
like a Mahayana Buddhist udana or a

dhamapata yeah I've read it's like the Tibetan dhamapara which actually was it was had a some verses from the dhamapada but it was more strongly based on um the udana and also some some sutas from the the suttony Pata which is just completely almost completely different from the the tarawada Buddhist like different different damopadas in the in our in the different schools of Buddhism they uh they vary quite a lot so I guess my opinions on the downpod it's well worth reading it contains a lot of wisdom but it's mostly much later than the time of the Buddha

which for most people I mean it's not
only important

so the next question is from Ricardo
and Ricardo says what is the meaning of
panio basam

that is my poly name

the poly name given to me by my
preceptor in my ordination

is a combination of two words panya and
obasa

means wisdom or understanding like

pragya in in Sanskrit or project in
Sanskrit

and that in itself is a prefix plus

means knowledge it's like panya has the
exact same

etymology as the Greek word prognosis

it's like the Paw here or pra in in
Sanskrit it means like fourth or
forwards you know it it like denotes or
kunnotes a forward motion although
sometimes it's just an intense fire as
it is here so it's just like true
knowledge true understanding and the
obasa

it also is a prefix plus a root the o
means downwards and the basa means shine
so it's like shining down so panya is
understanding and obasa is like shining
down like the light shining down from
the Sun
so it means something like understanding
shine

I am Mr understanding shine
and I wouldn't have named myself that
but because I was born on a Thursday
um in is Burmese tradition that you get
your name starts with a p b or an m
I probably would have named myself
something like munigosa
but

I'm playing your Bossa instead
so I'll just move on to the next
question

I Mr understanding shine we'll move on
to the next question and this is from
Johannes

and Johannes says
why do Western Buddhists not care about
the sleeping at high beds using high

chairs rule I'm assuming everything we consider a normal bed today would be considered luxurious in the time of the Buddha I never was in a meditation center or a monastery where they could have considered this though okay why do Western Buddhists not care about the sleeping on high beds yeah it's pretty much what Johannes here says it's like pretty much all beds are like luxurious big beds now it's like

um technically going with the rules of monastic discipline if the bottom of the frame is more than eight finger widths above

the floor

see

if it's more than that high above the
floor the bottom of the frame then

that's too high

but also

if it's big enough for two people to
sleep on it which most beds are then
that's that's just too big so you can't
have high beds or big beds

and uh if you really want to follow the
rule you just sleep on a mat on the
floor

which isn't very comfortable but you're
not supposed to be luxuriating in your
sleep anyway you're supposed to sleep
relatively little if possible

and when you go to sleep you should
already be thinking of getting back up
again

so yeah it's just a cultural thing I
guess

it's there's a lot of things like that
that a lot of Western Buddhists I mean
they just don't want to stop drinking
beer because

people drink beer it's just part of the
culture and especially part of the
culture of their you know their their
Social Circle or whatever and then
telling lies I mean gosh pretty much
everybody in the west tells lies almost
I try not to but it's like you say well

I'd like to come over but I'm busy but
really you just don't want to come over
or it's nice to see you and actually
you're hoping you wouldn't see them that
kind of thing I mean it's just
constant or continual let's say
continual

so yeah people are I mean most western
Buddhists are just lukewarm
you know they they don't really believe
anything deeply because there's so many
things you can believe you know we're
not living in a monoculture we're not
living in a in a society where pretty
much everybody believes pretty much the
same thing it's just you've got this
Smorgasbord of possible beliefs

and so nobody really

I mean they don't really believe really

strongly the way that uh someone from a

a pre-modern civilization does and so

it's like everything's optional

especially Western Buddhism everything's

optional

foreign

ER too

can't help it I was born that way

so let's just move on to johannes's next

question

which is do you think all spiritual

practices share the same core or do you

believe that only the teachings of the

Buddha can get you enlightened well I do

not believe that Buddhists have a
monopoly on enlightenment that is the
official party line of Buddhism
especially terrible Auto Buddhism
if you're if you're not a Buddhist you
can't get a lightning effect in terrible
Buddhism they say that if you're not a
monk or a nun
that if you become enlightened you've
got like 24 hours to be ordained or
you're gonna die
and I just no I just don't believe it I
think there have probably been lots of
enlightened Hindus for example I think
there may have been enlightened
Christians possible enlightened Muslims
so let's see do you think all spiritual

practices share the same core well if
they're truly spiritual
then in a way I mean you could say it's
like The Perennial philosophy to some
degree but I mean there's some practices
That masquerade as spiritual practices
that really are not spiritual practices
you know sacrificing animals or whatever
so

yeah I think that

I let's just say I do not consider

Buddhism a monopoly on enlightenment

I think it's a good system that you know
maximizes your odds about as well as any
um just short of having like a living
enlightened being sitting there like

looking through you and pointing out

what you need to do

that would be better than learning from

books

or learning from dogmatists

let's see here

so I think I guess I answered that one

I'll just move on to the next question

this is also from Johannes

and Johannes says is it really important

to keep the attention on the contact of

the breath around the entrance of the

nostrils or is it just convenient you

said yourself that the sutas were

composed in a way which made it easier

to remember them wouldn't the anapana

satisuta and the 16 steps

16 steps be a classical case of this
over categorization

categorization

for example if you let the commentaries
just be Irrelevant for a moment it reads
to me like just look at your breathing
and how it influences and is connected
to your body feelings mind aren't there
sutras where Sati parimukdam is said to
be practiced for meta meditation for
example or this parimuka means setting
your mindfulness to the front

it's uh it's sort of an enigmatic not
very well understood statement in like
the sari patanasuta or here it's the
anapana

um let's see here where do I start
answering this one is it really
important to keep the attention on the
contact of the breath around the
entrance of the nostrils well if you're
doing anapana if that is the meditation
technique you're practicing then
essentially that's how you do it
um if you're doing some other kind of
meditation practice then then obviously
if you mean if you're doing meta
meditation then then obviously it's not
important to keep your attention on the
contact of the breath around the
entrance of the nostrils because you're
focusing your attention on something
else and the point is to just keep your

mind focused on the primary object

something that's just going to keep your

mind sort of

distilled and and controlled more or

less

and and to gradually you tame it and

then it kind of Fades out gradually

until you get into really deep

meditative like absorption States

okay let's see

classical case of over a categorization

yeah it's definitely possible

um

yeah I think any kind of mindfulness

meditation then you're gonna put your

mindfulness to the front which doesn't

mean that you're you're focusing your
attention somewhere in front of your
face it just means putting something to
the front means prioritizing and making
it it's the most important thing it's
like a an ancient Indian

um what do you call it

uh just the way they would say things

having a mental block

it's just a manner of speech

so I'll just move on to the next

question here also from uh Johannes

quote one must try for oneself and see

for oneself and if one practices

diligently then at least one may gain a

glimpse unquote that is a quote from

David Reynolds also known as Mr

understanding shine

and then he says I would agree with you

without a doubt but sometimes you say

that you don't agree to the four path

model which is contradicting this no

according to the four path model the

stage of stream enterer is someone who

has had this Glimpse or someone someone

where the impeccable dhamma eye arose

everything that arises passes away so

why do you sometimes disagree with this

to this definition

um

just because

I mean I was answering a question of

someone who was skeptical of the

existence of Enlightenment or nibana
and that's why I said one must try for
oneself and see for oneself if one
practices diligently then at least one
may gain a glimpse of Ultimate Reality
for example

um because I mean there are some people
these westerners especially who want
like empirical proof of the existence of
nibana which is impossible because
nibana isn't even in this universe
foreign

in order to believe that it is possible
to at least get a glimpse of Ultimate
Reality doesn't mean you have to believe
in the four stages of sainthood as they
are expressed in the texts

so

yeah I mean you can say that some I mean someone is really established in dhamma once they've had their first glimpse of Enlightenment but that doesn't mean that you know they can't tell a lie and they have to do this and they you know there's this list of things that they they still have in this list of things that they don't have anymore you know with regard to Fetters and and like obstacles and so forth

so yeah I mean

ultimately Enlightenment is seeing Ultimate Reality or experiencing Ultimate Reality directly at least

that's one way of describing it and I
mean it doesn't necessarily have
anything to do with like the traditional
Orthodox and dogma of the four stages of
of sainthood

so I think I'll just move on to the next
question

this is from nirmit

and nerman has asked me a few personal
questions here

the first one

would you say you are happier now than
when you were a monk

well I will say that I answered this
question just a few like a month or so
ago

and so instead of going through all of

the Q and A's all 42 previous q a videos
before watching this one

he's just jumped right into this one
and uh

he disgrace his family

but I'll answer it again that's fine

I can't expect everybody to watch all

the previous q and A's cues and A's

before watching uh the most recent one

so let's see would you say you are

happier now that when you're a monk well

I mean I have more

more Pleasure and Pain I guess more

happiness and unhappiness because a monk

isn't really going for happy he's going

for like Equanimity you know he's going

for neutrality whereas if you're living
a worldly life in samsara you've got ups
and downs

and they all balance out to the same
zero I suppose but I mean you've got
bigger waves

so

I mean I'm healthier I'm living a more
natural lifestyle I guess in certain
respects I'm more tired now I have less
Vitality I suppose because as a monk you
know I can just sit around all day
and I could you know just sit around and
think and philosophize and write blog
posts and

I mean last last Sunday I was so busy
last week I was so busy I didn't have

time to write a blog post

so

yeah I have more joy now but but also

more

more of the opposite of Joy I guess but

I mean you're never going to be like

just because a person is a monk doesn't

mean they're not going to have any

happiness or unhappiness you can be

pretty miserable even as a monk

but um yeah I'd say that I'm living a

more natural

um I mean natural isn't necessarily

better but it's it's healthier I'm

living a healthier lifestyle now and I

have more love in my life more joy even

though I mean it always kind of gets
balanced out and positive and negative
balance out in the long run

so I mean it's it's kind of a trick
question it's

sort of comparing apples to oranges or
something

so I'll just move on to nirmit's second
question

you have said celibacy was frustrating
why do you think you are not able to
free yourself from sexual desire

well two reasons come to mind one is
that sexual desire is just built into us
you know it's just built into like
certain areas of the brain that like the
endocrine system you know you've got

like

um

parts of your body are just designed to

have you be lustful

and uh so partly that

and partly is is sort of like I was

talking about earlier of breaking a

habit I mean

um

deep down you don't completely want to

break the habit and that was that was

the way it was with me it's like I

remember one time

I took some kind of Burmese herbal

medicine

and my entire body just broke out in

this rash I was just itching all over
and uh one weird side effect is it just
it just erased my libido and at the time
it's I missed it or like when I was in
my early to mid 40s I stopped having
like pornographic dreams or at least
pornographic dreams that would result in
Climax and I miss them
because sex is is fun it's it's uh I
mean it's more than fun it's it's
profoundly enjoyable
although I have to admit I'm probably
less horny now than I was when I was
celibate yeah I can say certainly I'm
less horny now than I was from o
celibate partly because I'm have to work
for a living and I have to just attend

to all these other cares and and so I'm not just sitting around conserving my chi like I was before and also when you get something then it's like a starving man might just be fantasizing about food all the time but once he's eating regularly he doesn't think so much about it so there's there's that too but um

see why do you think you're not able to free yourself from sexual desire yeah I think those are the two main reasons so I think I'll just move on to nirmit's third question this is the last one this might be a little personal Are you a sodapono

and I mean for those of you who uh watch the earlier parts of this video and other videos that I've made I really am skeptical about the whole meaning of the term sodopona that originally it might just be someone who's like born again who has entered upon a spiritual life and if that's the case then yeah I guess I've entered upon a spiritual life I did that quite a while ago possibly before this life but with regard to what the texts say a soda Pana is and like the things he can do and the things he can't do the lists of this and that I really don't put much weight on those and I don't think about it much

so

I guess I answered that question I guess

so finally

the very last question of the entire

episode

is from lucid

and Lucid says are there any highly

regarded transgender Buddhist monks

well

with regard to terravada Buddhism there

are zero transgender Buddhist monks

because even if a transgender person is

ordained the ordination is instantly

invalid

so

yeah no transgender monks in terravala

Buddhism there might be some
masquerading as monks and they're just
non-monks however
on the Discord server
that uh I am a participant in
somebody posted a link
to me oh actually it might have been on
my phone some some ex-monk friend of
mine sent me this it's an article I
think or maybe a YouTube video of this
transgender a Japanese Buddhist monk
where I mean he's like wearing makeup
and
kind of gender queer non-binary or
something I think he does makeup
tutorials or or hair stylist stylist
stuff or something and

um he's not highly regarded I mean he's the only transgender Buddhist monk that I'm aware of it may be that in Japanese Buddhism you can be transgender and still be an ordained monk for all I know but in theravada Buddhism if you're transgender that you even if you go through the ordination ceremony it doesn't stick because it's just invalid from the very get-go so that was it that was the last question

and those of you who made it this far are welcome to ask questions just put them in the comments below if you have access to my subscribe Star channel you

can leave them there if you have access
to my

Discord server you can you can leave
them there and uh

feel free to like the video or subscribe
to the channel

and take a look at the URL links below
if you please

and be happy

hello and welcome to episode 44 of
question and answer I am your host Ponyo
bossa

and as usual we have a fairly long list
of questions to answer today

so much so that I'm thinking maybe I
should start doing these once a week if

I ever get up to a thousand uh a

thousand subscribers on YouTube I may be

able to just live stream these but I

think you have to have a thousand

subscribers first and uh I'm up in the

900s but haven't quite got a thousand

yet so if you haven't subscribed already

do so just so I can do live streams

and uh I went on a Hiatus it's been over

a week I think since I uploaded anything
partly because for the past week I've
had a black eye it's just now getting
better I think maybe just a little bit
of a little bit of a little bruise there
left

and uh

I'm tempted to say you want to see the
other guy but actually I uh walked into
a a bundle of metal at work that was
somebody had put it like blocking the
walkway

and it was right at eye level and it's
only like this thick and it was dark and
I didn't see it easily and I was turning
my head to look at something else and
then I just turned my face directly into

this just boom right in the eye

so

I guess uh I mean I I tend not to be
extremely vain but when you've got like
a Shiner you generally don't want to be
on uh making public appearances and so
forth

and uh in other news I got a little
message from Google

or blogger which is part of Google
saying that two of my blog posts on my
current blog are now behind like warning
walls where you have to click and say
that you're willing to see
disagreeable sensitive stuff one of them
is understandable it's that that

um lust epidemic one that I did back
when I was a monk
and uh the other one strangely is uh
Patton it was like it was a speech given
by General George Patton but I guess you
know for the Army to be militaristic and
that sort of thing is no longer
acceptable

but I I should just get to answering
questions here because we do have a fair
number of them as usual

and uh before I answer them I just might
as well say if you have any questions
you want to ask just put them in the
comments below

which is a convenient place

don't put them under non-q a videos

because I might let those slip through
the cracks accidentally
so let's go here first question is from
Raphael 46

and Raphael 46 says according to the
bahoo.com the Buddha said that women
cannot attain buddhahood but according
to the Soma suta Mara said to the
meditating non-soma quote this is Mara
speaking here that stage is very
challenging it is for the sages to
attain it is not possible for a woman
with her two-fingered wisdom
unquote the non-soma responded quote
what does a Womanhood matter at all when
the mind is concentrated well when

knowledge flows on steadily as one sees
correctly into dhamma one to whom it
might occur I'm a woman or I'm a man or
I'm anything at all is fit for Mara to
address and then Raphael 46 says how can
these two sutras be reconciled and
um they can be reconciled pretty easily
because Buddhism terrible Buddhism
orthodox theravada
freely accepts that women can become
enlightened in that fact if they
couldn't the Buddha wouldn't have
allowed nuns to exist in the first place
but
um according to the like the legends of
you know the whole idea of a lineage of
Buddhas how that there have been Buddhas

going way way back you know a good
jillions of years forever and ever
actually

um a Buddha is always male

maybe that Mara also is is always male

but um

so that's it I mean women can become
enlightened they just can't supposedly
according to the tradition they can't be
the wheel turner who rediscovers dhamma
after it has disappeared from the world
and that's what a Buddha is as opposed
to uh just a an ordinary arohaunt
although

I mean we can get into the origins of
that some other time maybe

so I'll just move on to uh Raphael 46's
next question

did the Pol Pot regime actually turn
Cambodia into a semi Monastery people
were forced to wear the same black
pajamas money was abolished the only
property allowed were spoons for eating
men and women had to work separately in
communes and couples only saw each other
rarely entertainment like Cinema and
theaters were abolished and people
weren't allowed to choose what to eat
well I mean if the Pol Pot regime was
creating a nationwide Monastery it was a
pretty crummy Monastery it's more like a
prison camp so I mean there are ways in
which a prison camp

kind of overlaps with the monastery you know you stay in cells and you're not allowed to have much fun and that sort of thing but um yeah I mean there's a little bit of overlap but I mean it'd be really pushing it to call Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge a semi Monastery it would be like extremely semi you know just a few percent I suppose I mean they were trying to create a kind of

spiritually dead Marxist Monastery maybe but that's almost an oxymoron it's almost a contradiction in terms so I mean yeah it's like the whole mental state behind it it was just

radically just diametrically opposed to
the mental state of of what would should
be going on in a monastery instead of
cultivating spirituality it's like you
know [__] spirituality it's just
[__] just you know work for the work
for the good of the people or for the
good of pull pot

so I think I'll just move on to uh

Raphael 46's next question

and that is

states that some people rejected the
Buddha's claim to supernormal Insight
saying quote the recluse gotama does not
have any outstanding knowledge and
vision he teaches dhamma that has been
merely hammered out in his head

following his own line of inquiry

unquote

the Buddha said that unless such people

abandon these assertions and relinquish

such views they would be cast into hell

most atheists Christians Jews and

Muslims don't believe that the Buddha

had supernormal Insight since this would

contradict their own belief system while

all these people go to hell then well I

have to admit the mahasiha NADA Suitor

of the Maji manikaya is a Suitor that

when I first read it it was kind of

embarrassing it was it sort of uh I

wouldn't say undermine my face but it

kicked it a few times and caused some

bruises

and if you read the mahasihana suta a lot of it is just the Buddha indulging in just the most grandiose bragging about how great he is

and I doubt that I mean it's like a Verbatim transcript of any talk given by the Buddha it seems more like

like early devotionalism where they're trying to glorify their Master you know these these monks and you know somewhat later days than the Buddhist time are trying to glorify the Buddha which is what just about any religion does to the founder of the religion

and they took it to the point of saying that you know anyone who denies that he

was fully enlightened is going to go to
hell which in a way is like religious
propaganda

although within the context of the
Sutton

the person who was saying it was saying
it maliciously you know it's like if
you're motivated by hate

then yeah there's a good chance you can
go to hell and I mean I I do encounter
this sometimes like just recently I've
been having a back and forth with this
rabid anti-religionist

which may wind up in a a blog post in
the near future

um also there's uh

um what's his name Ken

Ken something Ken wheeler I think it is
who actually wrote an essay accusing
Maha kasapa who was the Buddha's Chief
disciple at the time of his death he was
like the senior monk in the Sangha
according to tradition after the Buddha
passed away accusing him of murdering
the Buddha
and

I mean he has to really torture the poly
language even to make it seem plausible
and I mean that kind of stuff I mean if
Buddhism is true if texts like the
mahasihana at least with regard to the
you know slandering and enlightened
being

can can send you to hell then I mean
stuff like that I mean you're really
pushing it

um but with regard to

you know Christians and Muslims and so
forth who just favor their own religion

um

yeah I don't think they're gonna go to
hell for that

but I mean if you're really like
deliberately

slandering and demeaning a saint or an
enlightened being

and

I don't think they even have to be
Buddhist

I don't think they even necessarily have
to be fully enlightened
if you're just
based on just hate or or just some
similarly negative emotion you're just
slandering and bashing someone who is
really like a saintly wise person
then yeah that's going to have karmic
consequences
but it depends on the mental States your
karma is volition essentially
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Aaron
and Aaron says will you please make a
Buddhist mukbang series and for those of
you who don't know what a mukbang is
it's um you like mount a dash cam in

your car and then you go through a drive-through window usually this is usually how much Banks work and then you sit there and you eat the food that you ordered and you critique it and the only way I would do a mukbang would be you know we could find like some Hari Krishna vegetarian restaurant or something you know some kind of spiritual restaurant preferably when the drive-through window and uh do it then but I mean it probably would not be a good idea because when I eat I make like howler monkey faces and like food sticks in between my teeth and then I'm talking with like this chunk of

spinach or something there

it's it wouldn't be good I'd probably

lose viewers

on on a video like that but

what the hell you know if I could find a

suitable

um

a suitable restaurant that had any kind

of connection with dama and a

drive-through window then uh who knows

so I'll just move on to Aaron's next

question

have you used a Ouija board and what was

your experience or thoughts on that when

I was a kid my dad was really into the

occult

the occult

and um we had a Ouija board when I was a kid and we used it

many times I suppose but the thing is I was a kid and I really don't remember much from it

there was some talk about me being an Englishman in a previous existence with a name like John Carpenter or something uh like back in the 1800s and I think somebody I knew then became my guardian Spirit now which is often supposedly how it works but really I I can't I mean personally I think a Ouija board isn't so much Spirits talking through people you know kind of guiding the plan chat on the board it's more just like the

subconscious mind of the people who are
got their fingers on the planchette that
that are are doing most of it if not all
of it

but I do have one memorable experience
of the Ouija board

and that was

um I was a kid my brother was four years
younger than me so he was even more of a
kid than I was we were maybe like oh
maybe 12 and 8.

and we were sitting in the bedroom and
we consulted the Ouija board because we
had a housekeeper who apparently was
going insane

I mean she was just nutty to begin with
I mean she wasn't going and saying she

she was already there I think and we
just kind of wanted to consult with the
the higher powers to see how we could
help this woman

and uh

we got this weird message about how we
should go to a certain country store
that was up the road like a mile or so
and there we would meet an Indian man
and the Indian man would say
and then it just went am a m a m a m and
wouldn't stop and then we had to just
stop trying we came back to it a little
later and it just continued with the AMA
m a m and in later years I mean when I
was at the time I thought Indian was

like American Indian with the you know
the feather and you know Ugg and how and
that kind of stuff but
um in retrospect I mean it could have
been like an East Indian man and that
Rama mama was you know it could have
been like an attempt at the Mantra Rom
just repeating just
just going on and on although
how that would have helped our
housekeeper I don't know
so I'll just uh move on to the next
question this is from Motorhead
and Motorhead says any advice in regards
to getting through some bad times which
I and a few others are going through it
feels like we are in some kind of

spiritual battle between the forces of
darkness and the forces of light
love around the world right now
you know without love comes in
I feel like we are in some kind of
spiritual battle between the forces of
darkness and the forces of light love
around the world right now

um

well I think that spiritual battle has
always been going on sometimes it might
be a little more apparent than at other
times and now the Western civilizations
apparently in Decline
and you know things are starting to give
now we're reaching certain crises it

might become more obvious but that
spiritual battle I'm pretty sure between
light and darkness is just always been
going on in this samsaric human world of
ours

um

with I mean I don't know what
motorhead's uh specific situation is so
I really can't give any specific advice
other than you know read spiritual texts
one one thing that I used to read when I
would get depressed I'm pretty sure it's
the second lamentation in the Old
Testament in the book of Lamentations
and I think even most Christians or
great many Christians don't even know
that there's a book of Lamentations in

the Bible but the second lamentation I mean this the person who wrote that assuming that it's not fiction that it really happened

um just having seeing his city which was Jerusalem just sacked by the Babylonians and just people murdered in the streets and women raped and children starving and all this

um yeah it makes your own problems seem kind of trivial by comparison I mean there's so many people out there who are just in a Hell realm right here on this Earth that

um it's good to have a certain sense of

perspective I think although it may be
that he's uh

he's he's not so much having like a
really

trying times with regard to bad things

happening to him because he wasn't

really specific here it might just seem

like he's looking at the world and

seeing things turn to [_]

but I mean it's always been like that

sometimes it's more obvious than other

times

um read some history Maybe

ah read uh Gibbons Decline and fall

the Roman Empire although that's kind of

a heartbreaker especially when things

really start collapsing

it's really sad

um let's see

yeah maybe if Motorhead can give me a
little more info to work with in in how
to like tailor my answer to what he's
going through

but um

a little philosophical Detachment I
suppose

just uh read Buddhist texts that's
always good

so I'll just move on to the next
question with all due respect to
Motorhead I'm not sure what kind of
troubles he is having
and this is from Diane

and Diane says watching how ancient Egyptians prepared bodies so the soul can find them for the next life how does this compare with the Buddhist idea of reincarnation well I don't think there's a whole lot of overlap between the two other than the idea that when you're dead you're not just dead that you know that your Consciousness somehow continues after the body dies I mean that's about as far as I would take that other than just you know there's traditional religious things that people do in response to that belief

um

yeah in in terrible Buddhism or Buddhism in general there is no soul and I mean

your body is just

um

yeah I mean you might as well just

cremate it

in fact uh some some Eastern uh

spiritual teachers say you're better off

cremating a body after it dies just so

that the ghost if there is a ghost it

won't have this body to cling to because

um I I knew a guy who knew a guy who

could see ghosts and he said that like

at cemeteries he could just see like

Spirits just standing around their

graves you know just standing there

because they were so attached to their

body they were so identified with it

they just couldn't bring themselves to
leave it so cremation helps get rid of
that problem

um

really I mean the the body once once you
die you know it's just like a a
decomposing log

so that's a major difference between
um the Buddhists and the Egyptians and
some degree the Christians also they
think a lot of Christians think that on
Judgment Day you know everyone's going
to be climbing out of the out of their
coffins

and um yeah I really don't think it
works that way

so let's see I hope I have answered this

question to some degree and watching how ancient Egyptians prepared bodies so the soul can find them in next life how does this compare well the Buddhist idea of reincarnation or rebirth is you just get a different body you know the body is just like a vehicle

it's like the clothes you're wearing or something you just discard one and you put on another one when that when one of them wears out

so that would be the main difference I suppose

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from Brave sir Robin who used to be named Mary spelled

m-e-r-r-y but uh after he asked me what my favorite movie was and I told him it was Monty Python and the Holy Grail all of a sudden he is brave sir Robin who soiled his armor and brave sir Robin says as far as I know there are quite a few sutas in which monks are being enlightened or at least sewed Upon Us upon hearing the words of the Buddha like the five ascetics as an example so is it true that some people won't become Arya through meditation and genres but simply by reading sutas or hearing dhamma please comment well I think so many people allegedly just just for the sake of argument let's say that most

of the stories of people becoming enlightened or reaching some higher spiritual level just from hearing the Buddha talk they had parami which means over the course of past lives they had been meditating they had been cultivating um like morality and concentration and so forth and so they were ripe but because the Buddha hadn't come into the world yet and rediscovered dhamma said the wheel of dhamma rolling again they were kind of stuck you know they were ripe they're ready and all it took was the Buddha to give the one little nudge and

click

or or whatever sound effect you prefer

um

so that would be like a fairly Orthodox explanation of this but I do think that it's people that can become enlightened just from

you know hearing certain words you know they are ripe for it and there's other cases like in in Zen Buddhism there was the monk who was trying to become enlightened and trying to become enlightened he couldn't do it and he couldn't do it finally he gave up and just started

um becoming like the caretaker of the cemetery or Shrine or something I can't

remember exactly the details of what the place was and he was just sweeping one day and

he swept this Pebble which then hit a bamboo and caused this sound like Punk and and it just caused something to snap in his mind and he became enlightened but there's the another famous Zen story of I think it was an a Zen nun who was carrying water in a wooden bucket and she looked down and she could see the moon reflected in the water on the top of the sprocket and right at that moment because the bucket was old the bottom just collapsed out of the bucket and the water just disappeared you know through

the big hole in the bottom and the moon disappeared and that was it it was just cause this this click and really that's that's all it takes in a lot of cases it's like you're there's like this tension

and you've got a lot of momentum going and you got part of me you've got you've cultivated this in probably past lives and in the present life too to some degree and so all it takes is just this one little nudge and that that's enough and with uh really a realized teacher who can just look into you and see what it takes to to give you that nudge then it's much more likely to happen although it can happen more or less through just

random chance you know like like the the
pebble hitting the bamboo or whatever
foreign

but I don't think that they're going to
become enlightened without any
talent that has been cultivated
at you know in past lives or in this
life or whatever

so let's just move on to Brave sir
Robin's next question

and this is kind of an odd one I've
never been asked this question before in
fact I've never even heard of this
phenomenon

he says

have you ever encountered a tetraphobia

apparently it's a big thing in Asia my birthday is the fourth day of the fourth month which is coming up soon so happy birthday Braves Robin and I assume just around that time you will publish number 44 that would be perfect so tetraphobia just literally I mean I know enough Greek to know that tetraphobia means like fear of four fear of the number four and I've never heard of that before I mean in Asia there are certain phobias like I've heard in Japan it's a common phobia of men especially that their guts are going to come out of their belly button and they wear this band to kind of hold it in but um yeah I've never heard of a fear

of the number four in Burma I mean
that's that's the main Asian country
that I have familiarity with
uh it's the only it's the only uh Asian
language that I speak relatively well
other than maybe a little Polly but it
was Paulie was never really uh a spoken
language except maybe in among ancient
Indian monks
plus maybe a few scholar monks nowadays
so yeah the fear of number four
yeah I can't I have no experience with
that so I'll just move on to the next
question which is
from son of the father
which is

kind of tautological

I think well although he could be some
of the mother so

son of the Father and Son of the father
says

have you read any Carlos Castaneda any
commentary you might have would be very
interesting thank you

as it turns out I read Carlos Castaneda
as a teenager my father as I said was
into the occult

and he had most if not all of the Carlos
Castaneda books and for stories I would
point out there was sort of a little

Scandal when it turned out that Carlos
Castaneda was sort of a a made-up person
that the person who wrote it was like a

they were like a professor at
like Evergreen State College in
Washington state or something
um maybe I assume they had some
experience with you know Yaki Indian
Shamanism and so forth you know they
weren't just making it all up but I
think to some degree this it was uh kind
of fictional and the first book was
mind-blowing and it was mind-blowing
enough that I wanted to read the next
one but as the books progressed it just
kept getting farther and farther out it
just started getting more and more
difficult to believe like
um The Duel with the witch and where

there was one spell he had to do where
you had to take a some kind of lizard
and so it's so it's mouth shut and take
another lizard and so it's eyes shut and
I don't know it just it just got weirder
and weirder just more and more it seemed
to me more far-fetched

but the first one especially you know
the uh you know uh teachings of Don Juan
you know the Yaki way of knowledge or
something

um yeah that's interesting you know he's
talking about taking masculine and so
forth or or I should say peyote uh some
of his experiences with that and I still
remember a few of the teachings like how
to do lucid dreaming there's there's

some emphasis on that where
um Don Juan is telling Carlos
you know look at your hands when you're
in your dream try to remember to look at
your hands because that's in a way it
kind of remember you it helps you to
remember to to lucid dream that you have
some control over in your awareness in
your dreams
and lucid dreaming is kind of
interesting

I've I've come close to it I've been
told that like if something weird
happens in a dream like you're riding a
bus and then the next thing you know
you're in an airplane and and you didn't

get off the bus and onto the airplane is just somehow the bus turned into an airplane when you weren't looking or you're walking along talking to an old friend of yours from high school and then the friend of yours turns into some famous celebrity and it's not like the friend left in the celebrity came it's just that you just turned into it somehow and then you think you have that moment of wow how'd that happen and that that that one moment of wild how that happened is sort of like you're at the threshold of lucid dreaming but I'm I'm rambling at this point so we'll just move on to the next question

and this is from Ricardo

or however that name is pronounced I

think it might be in uh Italian or

something

how do you say Ricardo in Italian

there's two C's

anyway Ricardo in uh

anglicized Italian

says many say that death is a painless

process what does terrible Buddhism say

about this given the fact that birth is

undoubtedly painful

well

um when the Buddha's talking about the

four noble truths and he's you know in a

way defining dukkha or at least giving

examples of it and you know so say birth
is do con

um you know getting old is dukkha and
getting sick is duka and dying his Duke
on you know getting what you don't like
is dukkha not getting what you do like
his new coming separated from what you
love is dukkah and so death is on the
list of painful or unpleasant suffering
inducing things

although it's more the verb of dying
it's the process of dying is probably
more unpleasant than the actual
transition into death

that you know the moment of death is
probably much less traumatic than the
moment of birth

so let's see I mean for a lot of people
you read these books

um I mean there's a lot of books about
near-death experiences or what happens
after you die and so forth where people
at the moment of death were right before
death you know they just kind of go into
the state of bliss and you know they
start talking to some beloved friend or
relative or you know their wife or
something has been dead for years and
they're like you know it's so nice to
see you again I'm coming with you kind
of stuff

and so I think overall

for just statistically for most people

being born is probably scarier and more
traumatic than the moment of death
although for a lot of people you know
you might have a lot of ickiness leading
up to that moment
and that would be where most of the duka
comes from but I think um
I can't remember who said it but I think
there's some truth to this that well you
know everyone or almost everyone fears
death but then once you die you realize
oh I've done this lots of times it's
really not that big of a deal
so yeah I'm sort of conveniently
straddle the fence on that one
um
yeah dying can be icky but the actual

moment of death probably is really not
that icky although you know everything
would be Duke anything that has a
beginning and an end according to
Orthodox terrebon of Buddhism is duka
so yeah dying would be duka too but then
again in terrible at these even
happiness is do come
so I should just move on to the next
question here this is from lucid
and Lucid says what do you think of
Colin mikia the Buddhist Enclave that's
all the way in the middle of Russia
seems a little strange that there's a
Buddhist state in the Caucasus
from what I heard they immigrated from

Mongolia several hundred years ago and many were ethnically cleansed by Stalin during World War II for allegedly being pro-german

well yeah it doesn't surprise me that I mean most of central Asia was Buddhist before Islam came along and

um I think a lot of that especially up in Mongolia Tibet and and thereabouts was sort of a tantric kind of vajrayana kind of Buddhism and I assume the the Buddhism of call mikia was like that and they're one of the the relatively few uh Central Asian ethnicities that did not convert to Islam but aside from that I mean I know almost

nothing about call Mickey up so I'm just making some educated guesses there

um

but I mean because they're like probably come much closer to Tibetan or Mongolian Buddhism than they do to terravonna it's you know it's it's really not a big deal to me I don't have any dogs in the fight or anything

so I'll just uh move on to the next question this is from C.O Vox and sipad zidana whose name just rolls off the tongue now

ah

and CEO of action and sipad zidana says the Buddhist says in the Sam mutinykaya

35 23 quote and what because is the all
the ion forms the ear and sounds the
nose and odors the tongue and tastes the
body and tactile objects the mind and
mental phenomena this is called the all
if anyone because you should speak thus
having rejected this all I shall make
known another all

that would be a mere empty boast on his
part if he were questioned he would not
be able to reply and further he would
meet with vexation for what reason
because Mikus that would not be within
his domain unquote

this means that all that we can know
about reality are through these six
senses and that anyone who talks about a

reality outside this is speaking about
something they can't really know this
sounds like it is probably the most wise
approach to our situation and existence
however if this is the case then where
does that leave nibana

okay well yeah that attitude that's it
kind of reminds me of David Hume who uh
according to the the saying he
distrusted everything until he finally
came to his senses

and um I think the all here is
essentially referring to samsara you
know it's the phenomenal all it's the
worldly all

and as uh as I keep saying nibana or

Nirvana is just completely off the scale
so it wouldn't be included in that
although abidama philosophers kind of
dragged it back in to the scheme of
things

um

let's see here it sounds like probably
the most

let's see

something they can't really know is
okay and anyone who talks about a
reality outside this is speaking about
something they can't really know well
they can't really know it because
um I mean once you you know nibana the
ultimate truth there's no longer a
person involved you know they becomes

totally irrelevant

because they are some sorry you know

they are in the world and and part of

this all

and uh

just going with the context here

obviously nibbana is not part of this

all

right and now some people would say well

that's because Nirvana is just

Extinction it's nothingness but that's

there there are other Susans that that

um debunk

that claim

and uh

some people actually use this this

passage here about the all as a way of endorsing the Buddha claiming that there was a there is a self

by just saying well the self isn't part of this all but that's really pushing it but something that's completely off the scale you know the absolute ultimate truth would uh would not be part of this because it is not phenomenal it's you know the all pretty much is like a plural

in a way I mean it kind of there's like this implication of plurality of all the ten thousand things mentioned in the in the Dao tejing and uh you know ultimate truth underlies that so that would be my attempt and answer

there I mean

um how would you know it I think is the main point here and it's you're just transcending the all you're just going beyond the the multiplicity of the samsaric phenomenal universe and it's not you that knows it it's just I mean everybody has some inkling of ultimate truth I think the Mahayana Buddhists uh emphasized this more than the taravada Buddhists do you know this like the Buddha nature essentially is that at least you've got this inkling you know you've got some intuitive awareness of Ultimate Reality which pervades you and everything else

and

I mean it's it's not really you

know it's it's hard to explain I mean

it's paradoxical once you get into

infinity and formlessness I mean just

Paradox is just lurking somewhere nearby

and Nirvana is that way ultimate truth

is that way

so

um I mean there is the knowledge but

it's not really you that knows it

and it's it's hard to explain but I mean

the easy answer is that nibbana is just

off the scale

I mean it can be known in fact it's the

only thing you really can know because

everything else is just belief like

anything perceptual is a belief it's not
genuine ultimate knowledge it's not
paramata Sacha it's just

Samuri Sacha so this is like the the
Samuri Sacha all

he's referring to

seems to me otherwise he'd either be
denying nibana or would be saying that
like the Mahayana Buddhists that nibana
is essentially samsara

and that's not a terrible odd Buddhist
teaching

it's a sweet tea by the way because I'm
in the south

oh

okay so I'll just move on to CEO of

actiona's next question and I don't even
have to read the name anymore just it's
like

I've gotten grooves in some neural
pathway that I can just blurt it out at
any moment

oh so CEO of action c pot Z do not and I
might be pronouncing it wrong but
nobody really cares possibly not even
CEO of Acts himself

anyway he says I listen to scary stories
like ghost stories cryptozoology and
murder Tales to put the fear of death
and the unknown in me so I meditate more
it reminds me of when mogulana saw a
flying ghost being chased and was
relieved he is above such things and I

want to strive to read their to reach
there too is this a good idea for
motivating me or is it self-destructive
by putting more fear in my mind
well I mean fear is unskillful but I
mean it can be used as skillful means
using some Mahayana jargon I mean in in
terrible Buddhism there is emphasis on
some way gap which is a sense of urgency
like the first time I went and saw dead
bodies in a morgue which was in Mandalay
Burma I I was just filled with some Vega
you know you you leave this morgue which
is full of dead bodies you know a dead
baby's dead women dead guys who've been
stabbed to death and then you come out

into the sunshine and the birds are
singing and the kids are playing and
there's this young guy flirting with
these two girls and you just want to say
how can you guys be that way don't you
know what's in this building back here
don't you know we're all gonna die
the way I felt at the time
um although the the core Runner sees
them all the time and probably doesn't
have much effect on him anymore
so it depends on your individual mental
States I mean are you getting enough
benefit from scaring yourself that it's
worth it that you are making progress
that is worth the being scared and maybe
having the occasional bad dream or

something

um but definitely in Buddhism it

encourages monks I mean not to listen to

Ghost Stories and you know take an

interest in like Murder Mysteries and so

forth but

I mean to go to Charnel fields and

seeing rotting corpses lying on the

ground just to contemplate death

to remind yourself that yes indeed this

body and this this thinking mind are

going to die

that I mean it is called one of the

great protectors and uh I mean it's

definitely to your advantage to keep

that in mind

so

it depends on your own mental States and
how you go about it I think if you go
about it skillfully then
you'll get more benefit than than
otherwise

and so I'll move on to covax ncpad
zidana

next question

ah

in your video he says

of the ryuhasuta you said the Attica

Wagga says morality won't get you

enlightened however technically the

three poisons are not really morality

but rather the internal characteristics

of someone's mind which is what I was

talking about in my older question
the other text you said that was as
ancient as atikawaga was the parayana
Wagga in this text the Buddha says to
UPA Siva quote mindfully contemplating
nothingness

unquote replied to Buddha depending on
the perception there is nothing crossed
the flood give up sensual Pleasures
refraining from chatter watch day and
night for the end of craving and his
answers to disa Mattea Buddha says
leading the spiritual life among sensual
Pleasures replied to Buddha rid of
craving ever mindful a mendicant who
after assessing is quenched that's who

has no disturbances that thoughtful one
having known both ends is not stuck in
the middle he is a great man I declare
he has escaped the seamstress here
the seamstress is kind of a strange term
that I mean mainly he's you know he's
he's getting away from uh you know in
sort of like the fates in Greek
mythology or they're spinning the thread
you know

so

oh he keeps going here based on this and
more verses from the Pariah nawaga the
Buddha says the that in order to cross
the flood we must overcome sensual
pleasure and end craving in fact it
seems the destruction of craving is the

goal of the path according to this but nothing can be said about them after their Consciousness ceases so even the most ancient form of Buddhism requires you to be a saint and would disagree with the krishnamurti theory of Enlightenment where you can still have this defilement thoughts well there's a lot I could address here and I'll probably forget to address most of it but I mean in the Attica Wagga it says that a monk is not even opposed to craving which doesn't mean that he wallows in it it's just a like attraction and aversion clinging to

anything isn't is more of a detriment
than a help ultimately I mean so long as
you're clinging to anything
or or pushing away anything as long as
you've got attraction or aversion then
you're not there yet and that's the main
point of the atikawa guys you shouldn't
even believe in anything because that's
a subtle form of clinging
so yeah the article Wagga says you
shouldn't even
um be opposed to craving the wise man
that's not opposed to craving and that's
kind of the way that it is about
morality too I mean it's not saying that
you shouldn't be moral I mean immorality
also is not it there's another sutta that

I'll I might uh do a video on
soon

where the Buddhists say neither morality
nor non-morality is going to get you
enlightened

so it's it's sort of he's referring to
the mental stage more than anything
immorality in Buddhism is a mental state
so it depends on how you do it it's it's
really not what you do it's the mental
States involved in what you're doing
that really are making Karma
and keeping you stuck or getting you
liberated one of the other maybe both at
the same time to some degree
and with regard to the parietal Wagga

um it's considered to be

um relatively very old although maybe
not as old as the oldest parts of the
altakawango and the the introduction to
the Pariah noaga and the conclusion are
obviously late

so you had an older group of texts that
got like later on got a new intro and a
conclusion like tacked onto it

I think the intro even uh mentions the
32 uh marks of a of a great being which
is uh

I hope at the very least it's it's
relatively new because no person can
have all 32 marks at the same time
so let's see here try and get back to
this question here

based on this more versatile is in order
to cross the flood we must overcome
sensual pleasure yeah but overcoming
sensual pleasure means you're not averse
to it or attracted to it it's like
it's like the middle path in like the
dhamma Chaka the first sutta the Buddha's
um traditionally considered to be the
Buddha's first sermon
he's talking about the middle path
between self-indulgence and self-torture
self-indulgence would be having aversion
SEO
self-indulgence would be having
attraction for sensual pleasure and this
self-torture would be like a version for

sensual pleasure and some sensual
pleasure you just cannot avoid
there are some sensual Pleasures like
sleeping bathing eating
that I mean you just can't completely
avoid them and so you have to have this
philosophical Detachment to sensual
pleasure because you're going to
experience it sometimes you can't just
completely avoid it
and uh let's see

let's see I'm trying to trying to answer
this question like coherently
the destruction of craving is the goal
of the path yeah well I mean that's the
the four noble truths the the second
Noble truth is you know craving is the

cause of all suffering
so yeah but you're not going to
you're not going to eliminate suffering
by eliminating craving by having
aversion for craving because that's just
another kind of craving
it's just another attachment
so that's that's the main message of the
article Wagga is you just let go of
everything you let go of even the desire
for enlightenment you let go of just
everything and that's the only way
you're going to become fully enlightened
and that's really Advanced it's not for
everybody and uh that's uh as I
mentioned before that could be an

explanation of why the atikawaga is so
radically advanced

in some ways is that it was directed
towards

the Buddha's early disciples who were
already for his dwelling ascetics before
they ever met the Buddha

and then later on he started getting
like normies and beginners and so forth
so he had to start teaching Elementary
stuff and I'm sure the Buddha like

ordained monks that he knew didn't have
much chance ever becoming enlightened

you know they just weren't right for it
yet so he's just telling them you know

how to do this Elementary stuff to lay
people that come to him you know he's

not teaching them how to become
enlightened now because they're just not
ready for it they're not ready for the
nudge

foreign

I think I think I answered that question
so even the most ancient form of
Buddhism requires you to be a saint and
would disagree with the krishnamurti
theory of Enlightenment where you can
still have this defilement but well I
mean whether you're a saint or not would
depend on you know whose Criterion of
sainthood you're following I mean you
definitely have to be a sage or a Mooney
but

um you know one person sane is another
person's heretic

yes

like uh my sweetheart was watching this
this Indian now he's not Indian he's a
he's the guy that that teaches uh
he doesn't like the the word Hindu so
it's uh something Dharma and the word is
eluding me I'm having a mental block
most of you who watch this well a lot of
you will probably know who I'm talking
about he's I've been compared to him
when I was a monk I was considered to be
like the Buddhist version of this of
this guy
where he's just really
um kind of traditionalist has no use for

any of the the woo-woo uh touchy feely
leftist post-modern stuff that's trying
to get injected or inoculated into
Eastern spirituality and he's just
saying that you know any sage has to be
vegetarian there's no way you could
become enlightened without being a
vegetarian he you know he's he's a Hindu
it's uh someone

I don't remember but I mean the Buddha
ate me Jesus of Nazareth ate meat I mean
most of the Tibetans ate meat because
there wasn't a whole lot of veggies
growing up on the Himalayan mountains
so yeah it's just
um you know the Buddha would be

considered just a sinner because he ate
meat

um just going by somebody's standard of
morality somebody else's standard and
there are a lot of of

um

people that were very extreme in their
ideas of moral Purity and so forth like
the ajivakas and the jains who referred
to the monks of the Buddhist monks is
just like shaven-headed householders you
know they could they could wear shoes
you know they could eat meat

they could use a walking stick if they
weren't feeling well just all this stuff
that

um you know just besmirch is their

virtue

and uh dealer data who allegedly tried
to kill the Buddha I'm a little bit
skeptical of that

maybe he did I mean that's that's what
the texts say

he was trying to to take over

um the Buddhist Sangha and he was

insisting that all monks have to be

vegetarian and you know all monks have

to wear rag robes and not accept

invitations to people's houses and only

eat you know food that They begged in

the streets and so forth and uh I mean

that was considered to be just standard

morality for a lot of spiritualists in

India that time and the Buddha said no

it's not necessary

so whether you're a saint or not depends

on

standards of sainthood you've got

but I think I should move on to the next

question

which is kind of the next one is going

to be kind of a fun one

this is also from CEO of action

let's see

he says here are some moral conundrums

for you there is this is this is just

classic you get this in like uh 100

level philosophy classes in college or

something

there is a train approaching an

intersection on a railway with one side having one person tied to the railway and the other side having five people tied to it the train is going to kill the five people tied to the railway but you can pull a lever which changes the direction of the train and saves the five people but kills one person on the other railway you save more people but your actions directly cause the death of someone what would you do well I'm just going to answer this in accordance with this strict Buddhist ethics and the strict Buddhist ethics is you don't touch that lever if the five people die it's not your doing but if you switch

the lever so that it kills one person

that one person is you're doing

I mean not doing something is morally

neutral just to sit there and meditate

or just observe with Equanimity the five

people getting squished you haven't done

necessarily anything wrong at all you

haven't done anything

but if you you know you make you switch

the levers that one person dies you've

just murdered that one person

anyway he continues here part two of

this question

if you are on a train yourself and there

is no intersection this time but five

people are tied to the railway in front

of the train

you know for sure if you

push a fat person oh fat shaming this is

Politically Incorrect if you push a fat

person

fat person

with a gentle shove in front of the

train it would it will make the train

come to a grinding Halt and save the

five people tied to the railway what

would you do well the answer is the same

it's I mean you if you if you push the

fat person

then uh yeah you've just murdered

somebody whereas if you don't do

anything you haven't murdered anybody I

mean you've you didn't save anybody

Maybe

but

um just going with strict Buddhist
philosophy

or strict Buddhist ethics

then yeah in a situation like that you
don't do anything but that really does
lead to strange circumstances like I can
I can uh

I wrote a blog post about this probably
several months ago by now

um about what happens if you there's a
terrorist we won't say he's Islamic
that's Politically Incorrect but let's
say there's this terrorist and he's got
a like a a suitcase nuke

um somewhere in a big city it's just

gonna blow up numerous city blocks it's
going to kill thousands of people
and

you don't know where that suitcase is
but you you've you've apprehended the
terrorist he knows where it is so do you
torture him in order to extract the info
on where the suitcase is so you can save
literally thousands of people by
torturing this one guy who I mean he
pretty much deserves it

so I mean from the Buddhist point of
view just just hardcore hard-nosed
Buddhist ethics

you just let them explode you might you
might you know drive through there

warning people you know evacuate go away
but you don't know exactly where the
where the thing is anyway so you're just
gonna have chaos

um so

it seems to me you may be justified
in torturing that one terrorist in order
to find out where the nuke is
and I mean it's just a personal thing
sometimes

um you have to do wrong because it's the
lesser of two evils you sometimes it
just is it just makes sense
that I mean you're gonna take a hit for
the sake of somebody else and Buddhist
ethics really doesn't work that way it's
completely subjective you know the whole

world can go to hell but I mean as long
as you don't do anything wrong it's okay
and

I think it may be because we're
westerners

um maybe because we're just not ancient
Indians

it just seems really distasteful to just
stand there and watch somebody die

um just because you don't want to do
anything wrong

so

like I won out CEO of action as moral
dilemma

so I'll just move on to the next
question

from from CEO of action C positive now
this is the last question here not the
last question of all but his last
question I should say
can you please do some readings of
Mahayana texts that you found profound
it's much harder to sort through all
those texts and finding the gems and I
remember you mentioning some can be
amazing like one that talks about how
perception and volition are really the
same thing or something well I actually
have already done a few readings of
mahayama text I did the Sin Sin Ming and
uh the Tibetan I think I did the Tibetan
book of the great liberation
which are two of my favorite Mayan texts

I suppose I could do some readings of uh
so my favorite Zen Koons and so forth
um this one that you mentioned

um

yeah and the one that talks about how
perception and volition are really the
same thing or something that came from
an old book by a Russian fellow named
cherbatsky and it was I don't know if it
would even qualify as Mahayana I think
it would it was like the dignaga school
of a kind of medieval Buddhist logicians
they specialized in logic and I think it
was a day or some Hindu critic of them
from which they they know a lot about
this school because there's not a whole

lot of text surviving although there are
some Hindu texts surviving that are kind
of debating these these positions
and I can't remember which it was
whether it was the Hindu criticizing the
idea because the dignago school believed
in it or whether it was actually someone
from the dinago school saying this but
yeah for a long time I was having a
trouble with perception and volition
it's like how do you perceive something
which comes first is it the perception
or the volition like you know you're
gonna observe a blue spot I'm pretty
sure that was a standard example in in
this text I was reading in this Buddhist
logic text

um the blue spot

I mean

you perceived the blue spot first

but you CA how do you perceive it first

without directing your attention to it

but why would you direct your attention

to it if you haven't perceived anything

there yet so it was like I was trying to

work out you know how does that happen

and then in this book it was saying that

perception and volition are just two

aspects of the same phenomenon it's like

one is the temporal aspect and one is

the more static or you know one is the

the process and the other is the form

kind of a thing and then it made more

sense to me although in a way it's it's
heresy from a Buddhist point of view
because perceptual volition are
supposed to be
disqualitatively different
but it just makes good sense to me I
think it's the first Buddhist essay I
ever wrote was trying to explain you
know how human beings just the way our
mind works especially once we learn
language we divide things up into nouns
and verbs or subject and predicate kind
of a thing and so the perception is the
subject and the the volition the
volition aspect of the same mental state
would be like the predicate or the verb
so that was that was like a

um sort of an intellectual Epiphany that
I had long long ago was back in the
1990s

but with regard to Mahayana attacks yeah
I can read more of those

um I haven't read The Diamond Cutter yet
which is good I haven't read the the
heart Sutra yet

which is also profound even though it's
just crass heresy from a terribleen

Orthodox terrible on the point of view I
do have some uh

favorite Koons that I could do some
commentary on

but not today

in all likelihood

so I'll just uh move on to the next

question this is from Rick

and Rick says Rick here asks a bunch of
like personal kind of questions which is
fine

um Rick says do you have did you have
any goals upon entering monkhood
would you say that you achieved said
goals

well I remember when I first became a
monk I had some really like naive
optimistic goals

or even before I became a monk I had
these other goals it was one I was going
to renounce the World by the age of 30
which I did I was like

28 I think 27 28.

and then I was gonna
um be well underway whatever that means
by the age of 33 and then by the age of
37 which would be the year 2000 at the
time I should have attained you know
whatever it was I was attaining which
you know presumably would be sagehood
Enlightenment and so forth and it just
doesn't work that way you have these
ideas in your head
and I mean it's just some sorry
perceptions it's all delusional and the
reality doesn't work out that way
there's a common refrain in in the text
it's found in the Attica Wagga at least
once it's found in the sutiny Potter

more than once it's like however it is
you you you think of it it's it's
different from that
and so you can have goals like the goals
I had as a junior monkey I was gonna
have Jonah within six months that was
that was the plan and I just didn't take
into account that on just
constitutionally I'm a shitty meditator
I've just got oh dot shop is the the
polyword just like mental restlessness
you know my mind just won't settle down
easily it took a hell of a lot of work
to really get into deep meditative
States for me
and um
so yeah I had goals upon entering the

monk Hood but uh yeah I didn't I didn't
achieve the goals that I had
preconceived because they were sort of
uh just naive
delusional kind of goals

I guess

I mean even if you have the goal of
becoming enlightened being enlightened
is very different from what a normie
including me is a junior monk or
whatever thinks of it I mean it's like
it's it's not gonna be anything that you
can imagine
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is also from Rick
he says as a monk did you miss most

about being a monk aside from sex
now that you were not a monk anymore
what do you miss most about being a monk
and then there was this was in the
comments below the last q a and two
people who are familiar with me
answering such questions one person
wrote lizard geckos and another person
wrote wall clinging spiders named Lloyd
and actually that was the geckos it was
not so much what I missed about being a
monk so much as what I missed about
Burma

that those little the little wall the
little house geckos that the in internal
ones not the big ones the big ones that
yell really loud but the little ones

they just run around on the on the walls
sometimes across the ceiling they can go
right up a pane of glass and they chirp
like sparrows and they can change colors
and they eat bugs I mean what's not to
like

but uh what do I miss most about being a
monk

partly just the Leisure Time this is the
time to just sit around and think about
things like when you're working full
time and you're interacting with other
humans that I mean most of your energy
is expended on working full-time and
interacting with other humans so
um I have less energy now than I did

when I was among this because I was a member of the Leisure Class

you know I could just sit around and philosophize there are a few things I had to do but I mean it wasn't really taxing

other than if I was like doing intensive practice you know sleeping four hours a night or or approximately four hours a night and just meditating all the time then yeah that can that can take a lot out of you too but

um so what did I miss most about not being a monk

like yeah so yeah I suppose it's just like the

you have more energy more time and

energy to apply to

um you know thinking about things

including important things like like

dama

now I'm just kind of living it it's like

I'm taking what I learned as a monk and

putting it into practice

and I don't have as much time to think

about and I hope the quality of my blog

post hasn't decreased too much since I

stopped being a mom just because as a

monk you know you just sit around and

you just work on a blog post for three

days straight whereas I just don't have

that kind of time anymore

so yeah I guess it would be that

so I'll just move on to Rick's next question

knowing what you know now after being a monk for 10 wait 30 plus years if you had your life to live over would you become a monk again

well I mean if I knew then what I know now

it probably wouldn't be necessary for me to become a monk because I'd already know what I learned from being a monk for 30 years

so you know I could just do something different you know I could just make a bunch of money you know invest in in apple and Amazon you know make millions just from

knowing in advance getting Bitcoin when
it first comes out that kind of a thing
and then just get us get myself a big
estate and just

you know I could meditate there and it
wouldn't have to work all the time that
kind of a thing so that would be a
possibility too it would work better in
America I mean being a monk in Asia and
trying I mean more or less following the
way monks lived in in the Buddhist time
or in Ancient India

um I mean that's really optimal for
making spiritual progress at least for
some some people

but of course if I didn't know then what

I know now if I had to do it all over
again I'd do exactly the same as I did
before

but if I knew then what I know now yeah
I'd probably do things differently just
because I already know I mean I wouldn't
have to go through high school anymore
because I already know what I learned in
high school I've got a university and
education I've learned all kinds of
things so I mean why would you have to
go back and learn the ABCs when you
already know them

foreign

so I'll just move on to Rick's next
question

and this is kind of another easy one

because it's one of these questions like
kelmikia about something I don't know
much about are you aware of the Canadian
monk Utah Domo biku if so what are your
thoughts on him and his teachings
content yeah I really am unfamiliar with
with you to Domo I I know that he uh
uh he he lives in Canada he came from
Asia to Canada and was living in a
somebody's basement
for a while until finally a Sri Lankan
Buddhist group
um became aware of him and decided to
support him and set him up with a uh
something but with regard to I mean I
don't know if he's like the the

politically correct leftist type I I'm

I'm the opinion that I seem to have this

understanding that he's a straight

serious Monk

but

um

aside from that I mean he could be sort

of a leftist also that has drunk the

Kool-Aid and tries to inoculate dhamma

with you know post-modern leftist

talking points and so forth but I could

be confusing him with somebody else

um I don't think he's the one that runs

suto Central who is the the main culprit

in that regard in bikubody

so

yeah I I really don't know much about

him I can't really say anything about it
for sure other than what I've already
said

um yeah he is uh a western person by
ethnicity

so I'll just move on to Rick's next and
last question

can you elaborate on walking meditation
your current practice if any past
practice and experience how to's do's
and don'ts pros and cons Etc

um well I have discussed this a few
times in uh previous q's and A's q and
A's

um

so I mean I'm not gonna go into really

detailed stuff especially considering
that we're already over an hour here but
um at first I did not like walking
meditation

it just seemed uh I don't know you're as
a general rule your samadhi isn't as
deep when you're walking as when you're
sitting and then back around

1997 I spent two months at panditarama
doing like intensive practice there and
at in the mahasi tradition in generally
speaking it's one hour of walking one
hour sitting one hour walking one hour
sitting throughout the day and if you
have to do anything like wash your
clothes or eat or whatever that happens
during the walking times

so I mean you can skip a few of the walking sessions but they do say that you should walk at least an hour before you even sit down to meditate and just do walking meditation and it is relatively good for your health

um

and also it keeps momentum going because I'm one of those people that just can't sit Crossing it all day long

I guess in the goenka system there's no walking meditation but I mean it is useful to learn walking meditation

because once you learn how to do walking meditation you can meditate anytime that you're walking

so

my current practice is just pretty much just what I just said it's it's not so much back and forth Chun Kamina as it's called it's like whenever I'm walking um I can be mindful I'm not necessarily doing walking meditation every time I walk but sometimes you're just you know in a mindful mood and you just kind of go into meditation mode when you're walking and for me usually um I just am aware of the movements and Sensations in my legs legs and feet and one of my favorite um objects of of like focus when I'm meditating if I'm having a focus it's just like the

oily sensation in my knee joints as I
walk

but there's all kinds of feelings that
you can feel just here the cloth rubbing
against your legs or the pressure of the
ground against your feet whatever is
easiest most conspicuous you know the
easiest thing to note if you're doing
noting the the mahasi way of doing
walking meditation is pretty boring I I
really don't like it where
um you know it's just lifting moving
forwards sitting down lifting moving
forwards setting down and so you're
walking in slow motion and it's just
sort of mental drudgery sort of like

counting your breaths and you can do
um Elementary walking meditation by
counting your steps to like one two
three four five one two three four five
six one two three four five six seven up
to ten and then back to five and then up
to ten and that sort of thing which is
again it's it's like this sort of
calisthenics like this mental drudgery
sort of like calisthenics would be
physical just drudgery just these
repetitive almost meaningless actions
that you're doing just to Discipline
Your Mind

but sometimes like when I was in Burma
especially you know you just kind of
open yourself wide open and I'd be doing

meditation mainly of seeing but I
wouldn't be focusing on anything in
particular you know you just kind of
keep your eyes

you know in like a the focus of a cheap
camera where everything is equally in
focus and you just kind of keep your
mind uh clear and just walk back and
forth doing that

so that works too

but as I say nowadays if I am doing
walking meditation

um I'm just sort of walking around the
house I do that sometimes or like when
I'm at work or something sometimes I can
do it then too and then you're just

being aware of

um

just being mindful of anything while

you're walking is walking meditation

so let's see my current practice if any

past practice and experience how to's

do's and don'ts pros and cons

um yeah there aren't any real cons to it

unless

um your legs are fine and you could be

sitting across like it then you might be

making better progress getting better

results by sitting cross-legged

so I'll just uh move on to the next

question this is from Fred and

technically it's not a question it's

under the Q a though you know he's he

submitted this in the comments under the last q a so I guess it's fair game so I just wanted to comment on it I suppose Fred says monks are obligated to portray piety which I would be adverse to take part in exclamation point I am in Thailand and monks have it as a lifestyle one can never see inside a monk's mind I like to see smiling monks not endour emotionless automatons which I have witnessed yeah well I mean that goes all the way back to the Buddhist time you know monks aren't supposed to be smiling in public it's actually against the rules to laugh out loud in public especially if you're just doing

it carelessly because you don't care
about the rule

um

yeah so it's like if you're trying to
just fade out of samsara and I wrote a
blog post about this about why monks are
tend to be so boring because literally
they're trying to fade out you know
they're not trying to be interesting or
lively or anything you're just trying to
become less and less and less until
you're you're not there anymore
so it's just the tradition from going
back to ancient India
that I mean you just got a poker face
especially if you're going from homes
around which is when probably in

Thailand you see the most monks unless
you're entering monasteries you're
seeing monks going for alms you're
supposed to look down it's against the
rules to look up in public especially if
you're doing it
um deliberate or just carelessly because
you don't give a damn that there's a
rule against it I mean if you hear like
a loud noise above you or something is
you can look up and see what it is but
um you know you look down and you don't
show emotions I mean it's not so much
dour and and like you know it's not like
they're frowning or anything
is I mean a monk who is practicing well

at least you'll see sort of Serenity you
know you'll see some kind of like
contentment nobility on his face that
can inspire a lot of people
and my sweetheart just drove home I see
her on the driveway
but that's not part of the the question
that I'm answering here

um

yeah so I mean in the westerners
especially they like if they offer
something to a monk they want to be
thanked for it a lot of the time and
that's that's a No-No too I mean if if a
monk thinks a layperson in Thailand for
example the the late person in Thailand
may get upset they're not offering

something for thanks they're offering
something from Merit and they don't want
to get paid in this life they want to
get their payment in the next life
or or in the you know later
so yeah it's uh

yeah it's just a cultural thing it's
sort of like a culture barrier
but it does make sense if you read the
texts you see that I mean that's that
was just what you were supposed to do
and monks get really good at a kind of
hypocrisy where you know they're just
like

Focus you know they're looking down just
demure as [_] and then they get back to

the monastery and then they start you
know talking and giggling and goofing
around some of them not all of them but
some do that

I've been behind the scenes many times
so I think I'll just
move on to the next question and this is
from Austin

and Austin says

thank you Ponyo basa once again for
taking time out of your day to answer
these questions well you're welcome my
next question is has modern day debate
got in contact with you yet

so yeah Austin here uh was helping me
out he wanted me to debate somebody and
so he tried to sign me up for this

YouTube channel called modern day debate
and I've I looked into it myself too I
just kind of I sent them an email myself
and

um

they didn't get back to me really but I
did see a poll that they put up it's
like what do you want to see debates on
and Buddhism was on the list maybe
because of of me and Hinduism was one
and then it was just some of the
standard ones like you know atheism
versus Christianity or something and
Buddhism got like 20 it was not the
you know it was sort of one of the low
scoring ones

and um so it may be that they were just sort of feeling out into the demand for a debate

um with me participating in on Buddhism and it got kind of lukewarm uh enthusiasm and so maybe they just decided Well people aren't interested in that we'll just keep doing we'll just keep cranking out debate after debate after the debate on atheism versus Christianity or Christianity versus Islam or is the earth flat I've seen like a four hour long debate on on the the list I didn't watch the thing but there was like there's just debate after debate on whether the Earth is flat or not

so

and and modern native it's a good idea
although they really don't screen their
Debaters very well

um because some of them are just
incompetent debaters

so I'll just move on to Austin's next
question

and this is another calmikia one
or it's along the same lines as calmikia
and venerable Buddha uh what is his name
you tadamo you were discussing FH

Bradley and you have previously
mentioned George Barkley I was wondering
if you are familiar with Bernardo Castro
and his work if you're really into

idealism I think you might fancy this
philosophy I've heard of Castro but
aside from that I've never read anything
probably not even a quote
from Castro

so

so I mean idealism is interest I do
think ultimately you know the universe
is conscious you know it's like a
manifestation of consciousness
and I'm no materialist

but um

again now that now that I'm not a monk
anymore you know I don't have the time
and energy to just sit around reading
you know thick dry tomes of philosophy
like I used to I don't read nearly as

much as I used to when I was a mom which is kind of a shame it's a good habit to have it's better than just watching YouTube videos or playing a video game or something

so yeah I I'm unfamiliar with Bernardo Castro so we'll just move on to Austin's next and last question here

when considering philosophy do you view taravada Buddhism as having a philosophical dualism in regards to mind well I'm not exactly sure what he means with regard to a dualism other than I mean one of the the standard kinds of philosophical dualism is just the idea that mind and matter are qualitatively

different and in that case you could say
tarobada goes beyond dualism in that
like in in abhidham and Orthodox
terravonna abhidham has four ultimate
realities that
matter
mind mental States
and nibana so in a way it's it's dualism
with regards to the mind and that mind
and mental States or Consciousness and
mental states are too qualitatively
different ultimate realities there's no
overlap at all they're completely
distinct from each other
which I mean I really can't I really
can't buy that
I think that Consciousness is like the

essence of mind and that mental States like perceptions and volitions and so forth are like the the forms that it assumes you know like you've got a gold ring or a glass pop bottle the gold or the glass is the essence the substance and the ring or the bottle is the form that it assumes and I assume that Consciousness assumes uh the form of mental States

so I mean that's kind of a dualism in and of itself there's a dualism just within the realm of Mind itself but other than that Orthodox terravonna claims that there are four ultimate realities matter mind mental States and

Nirvana and so I mean they put Nirvana at the same level of reality as like tongue sensitivity or femininity or or just a wrong view is an Ultimate Reality in in abhidham it's it's unfortunate that when abhidham was composed like formal logic had barely gotten a foothold in India yet and so there are attempts at just being completely systematic and like No Nonsense and very sensible and rational everything it doesn't always work out very well so we'll just move on to the next question this is from Johannes and Johannes says do you in general remember said glimpse it's the experience is off the charts

memory can't be a medium able to grasp
it yet it has Everlasting effects on the
experience well regard to the Glimpse
the said Glimpse that's like
if a person is especially in in Terra
Vada if they become an aria at least a
sodopona they get at least a glimpse of
enlightenment
and this is kind of as I said earlier it
doesn't necessarily happen the way you
think it's going to happen but let's see
here this experiences off the charts
memory can't be a medium able to grasp
it well you can use memory in that you
can remember like your reaction or your
response you know you have this you have

this Glimpse which then has effects on
you

and then you remember the effect even if
you don't distinctly recall the glimpse
of

you know Divinity or infinity or or
whatever you want to call it
so

yeah I would say that I mean like I was
saying earlier this Glimpse it's always
at least latent you know it's always at
least subconscious in everybody unless
you're just a complete sociopathic
vampire that's completely cut off from
you know Ultimate Reality

and that in a way this sort of reminds
me of dostoevsky's definition of hell is

where you're completely cut off from God
but I don't even know if that's even
possible if you're a conscious being
I mean I wouldn't use the word god
necessarily but just Ultimate Reality
you know the ultimate the absolute or
whatever

it's it's always there you know you've
always got it inside you

and just cultivating a more of a more
conscious awareness of that is a major
part of spiritual practice or Dharma

so I think I'll just move on to the next
question here

also from Johannes hey panyo I just
watched your video about the Attica

Wagga really good video thanks for that
you're welcome

what's the offensive thing you wrote on
your website that made the ajan cha
monasteries change their mind well I
mean the Mind changing happened almost
immediately with my blog just because I
was always writing edgy stuff that was
sort of poking the the Orthodox bear
and this path press I got it right here
this Edition

of the article Wagga translation is by
path press as you can see here that path
press is affiliated with this group of
Buddhists that um they're like Fanboys
or maybe that's not a polite word
um you know they're they're followers of

a monk name an English monk named Jana
Veera who uh committed suicide in 1965
and one of the very this this European
monk who took an interest in what I was
writing was asking me I mean are you a
follower of

um

and as it turned out I started the blog
in one of the very first blog posts I
wrote was essentially disagreeing with
yanovira so that just kind of put him on
the back you know put him on his heels
just right off the bat

um but I think the main blog post was I
wrote this

really controversial blog post I mean I

it was it wasn't just one blog post that
I wrote but this one in particular I
wrote about this getting emotionally
involved with

um a woman in America I mean we didn't
have sex but still

um we got emotionally involved in and I
indulged in inappropriate behavior for
you know for a monk

and um

it was just too scandalous

so

that was uh that was probably it but
again I wrote lots of of other blog
posts that were

I mean in some ways

just as inappropriate or

scandalous or whatever

so anyway I'll just move on to the next

question he's he's kind of asking me

some embarrassing questions here

johannes's next question here did you

ever have a nemita

and this one is uh not particularly

embarrassing so I mean dwell on this one

for a while

animita literally means a sign

and usually if you're talking about

seeing a nemita in meditation it's with

reference to a mental state called

upachara samadi which is like the

stepping stone into Jannah it's like one

stage below first and Janna supposedly

and it's mentioned as far as I know only
in the commentarial tradition it's not
it's not really dealt with in the sutas
as far as I recall which indicates that
I mean it could be just like Apocrypha I
mean if it's so important I mean you
have to experience this before you can
get Jonah you'd think there'd be at
least one suta dedicated to discussing
this

but

nimeta

um it's like some kind of vision and
usually it's just sort of like a like a
white or light colored Circle or oval or
cloud

or some people will they'll they'll see

visions of the Buddha or some such

and um yeah my sweetheart's distracting

me outside the window

um

yeah sometimes you'll just see a vision

and um

let me take a drink

being a temptress

so and I have seen an imita it was

it was like a duck egg just sort of a

white or whitish kind of elongated oval

like this while I was meditating but I

really didn't care

um I really wasn't trying to see animita

in some some traditions like the the Paw

tradition they really put a lot of

emphasis you have to see the nimita
because you can't get Jonna until you've
had upachara samani because it's the
stage right below Jannah

so

um yeah I have I have seen a nemita but
really I did not put much importance or
emphasis on it because as I say

um it's it's a concept that's found in
the commentaries but

to the best of my knowledge it is not
really discussed in the sutos

so it's like an apocryphal kind of a
thing and I think a lot of people seeing
nimitas is you know they're told that
they have to see one and so their
subconscious mind just dutifully

obediently generates this nimitta

there's a lot of that sort of thing in

meditation if you're not careful

so we'll just move on to the next

question of Johannes

do you think that the Buddhist cosmology

is real

if the Buddha remembers all the past

lives he had and the Universe goes in

cycles that are very similar to each

other then surely in the past Cycles

there would have also been cars and

planes Etc therefore the Buddha must

have remembered them from early lives I

assume yet there's no mention of

anything that wasn't known in the

ancient Indian culture how come well
that's a good question actually I don't
think I've ever really thought about
that if the Buddha could remember all of
his past lives

then I mean going back into all these
different cycles of you know expansion
and contraction of the universe and Rise
involved civilizations and everything
you should have spent at least a few
lives

um in some technologically advanced
civilization

so

and there's no mention of it so it may
be that he just didn't bring it up you
know he can he would say that you know I

can remember my past lives and so forth
but I mean he's not going to be telling
stuff that's just going to be blowing
people's minds and filling them full of
doubt and dismay and all this kind of a
thing

so I mean that would be one explanation
um at the very top part of this the very
first line of this question do you think
that the Buddhist Buddhist cosmology is
real

um I don't think that it's exactly like
it says in the in the text for example
recently in some video I was expressing
some severe doubt about the the heaven
Realm of the perceptionless brahmas for

example who don't have any mental States
at all they're just like statues and
they just stand there in this Heaven
realm for millions and millions of years
they couldn't possibly be working off
any kind of karma because there's no
mental States involved

ah

so

yeah I have doubts about that and just
the whole idea of everything fitting
into

um ancient Indian ancient Indian beliefs
about how the how the world and the
universe work

like you know the realm of asuras for
example that's one of the lower Realms

he doesn't it it receives less uh
mention than any of the other Realms of
the lower Realms I think
um partly just because it's just sort of
like uh vestigial because you have the
belief in the the war between the Devas
and the asuras or in Greek it was the
gods and the titans this goes all the
way back to
proto-indo-european culture
um you know goes back into prehistoric
times this belief of this war between
two kinds of gods and it may have
originally been just a a kind of
religious conflict between two pantheons
you know you had one tribe worshiping

these gods in another tribe worshiping
these gods and eventually one of them
prevailed and became just the the
universal uh Gods of the people

I mean it wasn't necessarily really a
war between Davis or gods and Titans and
the Titans are defeated and they're
Enchanted at the base of this mountain
and so forth

so yeah I mean I think the general gist
of Buddhist cosmology is right I mean
you're going to have lower Realms and
higher Realms and it's going to go from
just very very crude and and miserable
up to the most refined and Blissful
States you know it's in in an infinite
Universe you know anything that's

possible can happen and does happen
although personally I think that some of
the higher beings and some of the lower
ones obviously have got tentacles and
maybe some of them breathe you know
liquid ammonia or something
on some completely different kind of
world it's all not all anthropomorphic
anthropocentric you know I have all the
beings except for animals look like
people
if they've got a body at all
so
yeah I mean so
the whole Buddhist cosmology thing a lot
of it is just ancient Indian culture and

to some degree you have to separate the wheat from the chaff when investigating some ancient spiritual tradition because they're going to have ancient cultural assumptions that really are irrelevant to the main point of the system

Buddhist cosmology is largely not entirely but largely irrelevant to the whole process of spiritual practice and just cultivating wisdom so and and yeah assuming that the Buddha did remember all of his past lives which would be presumably an infinite number of them yeah he might remember lives as uh some alien with tentacles breathing liquid ammonia but

um you know he's not going to talk about
it he's just going to talk about stuff
that's going to help other people
something that they can kind of grasp
you know they can get some kind of
um benefit from just by kind of
understanding it
so

I think I'll just move on to uh
johannes's next question
and this one is a surprisingly difficult
one for me to answer so I'm not sure how
well I'm going to answer it
what is wrong effort wrong mindfulness
and wrong meditation and how do we know
if we practice it or not

well wrong effort would be effort in the
wrong direction you know effort away
from

fewness of desires and that sort of
thing wrong mindfulness yeah that one
I'm not sure because I mean you can
never have too much mindfulness it's
there's uh the five Andreas or the five
balas but it's the five faculties or the
five powers

um two of them come in pairs which is
one is like

um panya and Sada or sort of wisdomen
and Faith or sort of like intellect and
Faith they have to be in Balance because
if you have too much intellect and not
enough Faith you're going to be totally

skeptical and you're not even going to believe what's true on the other hand if you have too much faith and not enough intellect or or like reason then you can't believe anything no matter how ridiculous it is and then you've got the balance of wryia and samadhi William is like energy and samadhi is concentration you have too much weary and not enough samadhi then your mind's just all over the place you have too much samadhi and not enough wearya then you just kind of go into a trance you just zone out so those have to be in Balance too but mindfulness you just can't have too much of it no

matter how much of it you've got going
that's good so wrong mindfulness I mean
it would have to be just sort of
bringing to mind

bad things you know just remembering you
know the girl you were you felt up in
ninth grade or something

because mindfulness Sati also can mean
memory

so it's just probably just attending to
unskillful objects

in wrong meditation

um

one kind of wrong meditation would just
be

um you know just meditating on

things that how do I how do I say this

this just meditating on wrathful deities
you know in a wrong way I assume Tibetan
Buddhists especially meditate on
wrathful deities but I mean if you're
you know meditating on like demonic
forces or something or wrong meditation
you just go into like a stupor you know
you just zone out like I had one guy
when I was in Burma I think he was
Chinese he was bragging to me about what
a good meditator he was because he was
saying when I meditate I don't I don't
notice anything I don't hear the ticking
of the clock mosquitoes can bite me I'm
just completely oblivious to it and I'm
thinking well I mean that's not

necessarily good meditation if you're
just like going into a trance where
you're just oblivious to everything
around you then

yeah I don't think that's necessarily
good meditation

so

yeah this is all these are all like
three steps of the a-fold path you know
right right effort right mindfulness and
right right concentration or he's got
right meditation here so wrong
concentration is just concentrating on
on something unwholesome
wrong mindfulness of just being
essentially you know attending to
something unwholesome you know being uh

mindfully aware like mindfulness isn't necessarily just being in the present moment I mean you really can't go wrong being in the present moment but it can also mean just mindfulness of you know the virtues of the Buddha or something and if you're just thinking like completely wrong stuff then that could be wrong mindfulness in that sense and of course wrong effort I mean if you just your effort is entirely directed towards you know making as much money as possible and destroying your enemies and stuff and yeah that would count as wrong effort

so how do we know if we practice it or

not well just to have a a super just a
basic awareness of Dharma
you know I mean you can
just compare what you're doing with you
know what's in the text or if you've got
a a good teacher that you trust you know
compare it with what he's telling you or
you can just describe it to him and he
can tell you well you're on the right
path or you're not on the right path but
it really shouldn't be that difficult
um but it does the more advanced you get
the more more subtle it gets until you
get into the other Arctica Wagga realm
where I mean essentially is you just
have to let go of absolutely everything
so I guess I'll just move on to the next

question this also by Johannes

what's the longest you ever sat in

meditation and what's the longest you

ever saw or know of someone sitting in

meditation well

when I sat in meditation it was in the

full Lotus and I do not have very

flexible legs and so

um the longest I ever sat was in the

full Lotus position now there's a little

over two hours

and it was it gets painful

especially if you're not very flexible

the the longest I I ever saw or know of

I don't know the longest I ever saw

there was this Mahayana monk from Korea

at pandita Rama and he could just sit
like a statue for hours

I mean commonly you know you have one
hour of sitting one hour of walking and
another hour of sitting sometimes you
just skip the walking part and just sit
for three full hours now he was just he
could just flop his legs out of the full
Lotus and just get up and walk away he
was fine

um there is

a Seattle in the ingu tradition in Burma
who will have people sitting at least
eight hours straight in the full Lotus
and as I guess part of it is just just
the screaming Agony in your knees in
your hips and your ankles somehow just

pushes you into some deeper kind of of
samadhi or something

but there are I mean I have heard of
people who have just sat in meditation
for at least eight hours straight but I
I'm not one of those people

so I'll just move on to johannes's next
question

don't you believe it's possible that the
Orthodox teravada 10 Federer model is
true and that there were enlightened
beings in other traditions and that
people like krishnamurti were
enlightened if you can't remember the
Glimpse
the Glimpse

then maybe people like Jesus Christian
ready Etc had this Glimpse in a previous
life and therefore already had a natural
understanding of Right View right
mindfulness and so on they just didn't
remember any Buddhist Doctrine and
explain their experience of nibana in
their own words well it's kind of like I
was saying earlier you can have parami
or you can have momentum going from you
know from the past that it's sort of
latent
in you
um

but with regard to the Glimpse I mean it
doesn't that Glimpse it might not have
much to do with a natural understanding

of Right View right mindfulness and so
on

so they didn't they just didn't remember
any Buddhist Doctrine

um

yeah I'm not sure I don't think it's
necessary to have been a Buddhist in a
past life to become enlightened

I mean you don't have to be a Buddhist
in this life I don't think that's a
terracy right there but I don't think
it's necessary that you've ever had to
be a Buddhist because I mean

just different systems have enough
genuine Dharma to get people cultivating
wisdom I mean there's just this natural

urge I think once you get to a certain stage in spirituality you just want to wake up and you just sort of are drawn in that direction

um you know that may be what a sodapana is you know you just get get to the Tipping Point where you know you're or it's like Ron Doss had this idea that samsara is sort of like a clock the old-fashioned kind the hands on it and you start at midnight with sort of you know one second or something that's like the beginning of this Consciousness that breaks away from the absolute and like is experimenting or trying to be this individual being that's separate from everything and then once you get back to

it's getting farther and farther away
from the source which is 12 and then
once you get to about six then you're
like coming back again you're getting
closer and closer and closer

so

I mean I think that can happen
regardless of whether you're a Buddhist
or not

um

the 10th Federal model yeah

so

yeah this is this is kind of a difficult
question for me to to Grapple with here
well yeah I'm not I don't think that
Jesus or krishnamurty either of the

krishnamurtis

necessarily had been Buddhists in in
previous incarnations regardless of the
Lost Years of Jesus stuff and all that
so I think I'll just move on to the next
question this is also from Johannes
and this is johannes's last question
would you be willing to or have you ever
LED some retreats
well

um I used to be willing to I mean when I
was a monk I was always kind of waiting
when I when I was living in Bellingham I
mean I was just this untapped resource
essentially because
for some reason the teachers there they
saw me more as competition or like a

threat to their position or something
than as like a valid spiritual resource
and so they they call in some some other
monk who is just a beginning monk who
really didn't know very much and have
him lead Retreats but my conditions for
leading a retreat at the time would have
probably been prohibitive because I
would refuse to lead a retreat that cost
money

so it would have to be supported somehow
and uh yeah I don't think they would
have gone for that

and then after I became a monk when I
came to here to South Carolina I had
still had this idea I could lead like

camping Retreats where you you hike a little bit out into the forest with maybe six people and then you you find a good place and everyone sort of camps in a separate place maybe without a tent or anything just sitting under a tree like in the old days and in the evening you come back to a one campfire and have like a Dharma talk and I think that's still a good idea but it just never materializes it's just sort of like the universe just doesn't want me to lead Retreats even when I was most qualified and just was like going for it you know just you know I can do this it just didn't happen it was just some sort of karmic block or something and now I'm

working full-time in a sheet metal shop
and have

um a sweetheart and other people to deal
with and just interact with and again I
just have less free time and less energy
so it's probably less feasible now than
it was when I was a monk but even when I
was a monk it just didn't happen and it
wouldn't happen regardless of uh all the
talk about it and people saying oh you
should have Retreats and all this and
that and it just never happened

so next question

is from drunk druck

and drunk drunk says how do we stop

judeo-bolshevism

and I assume by judeo bolshevism he's
mainly referring to Marxism and various
offshoots and variations and mutations
of of Marxism

or like quasi-marxism

and how do we stop it

gosh well I think

the main way of even just dealing with
it

is I mean I don't think you're ever
going to completely stop it

I don't think you're ever going to
completely stop Christianity either I
mean

you know it's just like this thing
that's already established and there's
always going to be some people that are

that are believing in it including some
um people with like influential people
so I mean the best thing you can do is
just expose it to sunlight you know
sunlight is the best disinfectant as
they say just do your best to expose it
and just show the like the the evil
consequences of it I mean Marxism has
proven itself over the past Century
we've got 100 Years of evidence
that Marxism in its various forms
is worse than fascism
I mean Stalin killed more people than
Hitler did Mao killed more people than
Stalin and Hitler combined that's even
setting aside like the Kim Dynasty in

North Korea and Pol Pot and all that

I mean how much

failed or stagnant economies

totalitarianism and genocide does it

take before people that are just lost in

their heads and just emotional wishful

thinking you're gonna wake up and

realize that it just doesn't work

I mean it may sound good in theory and

then they just insist because it sounds

good in theory that it has to work and

we're just going to force it down

people's throats at gunpoint if

necessary and it just it just doesn't

work

so I think the best thing is just

through you know informing educating the

masses

I think you got to be your best your

best bet

and so finally

the last question is from Eva or Ava Eva

Eva or Ava I don't know how to pronounce

that I think it's Eva

and Eva or Ava says how do I get the

Attica Wagga book translation by you I

really need it

and so I've I've already answered this

but I have received a few requests along

these lines just recently mainly after

doing the uh the video on some sutos

from the Attica Wagga where I'm

discussing the antagawagan its

importance as a Buddhist document where
it's potentially at least the most
important Buddhist document in existence
because it is in my opinion the largest
intact chunk of really primitive archaic
pre-theravada in Buddhism that we have
so how does one get the Attica manga
book there are a few different ways you
can go about it I mean if you want other
translations then they're out there just
you know find translations of the sutiny
Pata like you can I'm sure by this point
bikubody and ajan tanisaro have both
translated it

um

if you want if you're referring to my
translation of it then on on my website

which is languishing

um

nipapancha.org and i p p a p a n c a DOT
org

there there is a digital copy of it that
you can download easily

um also I have been told that there are
at least two different editions of my
translation

um linked to the Wikipedia article on
the Attica Wagga so there's that too but
if you wanted a paper book copy of it
you'd have to contact me and give me
your mailing address and I could send
you a copy of

let's see I think I've got it right here

this second edition I do have quite a few copies of this it's like this little you know Poly on one side English on the other side

and I can send I can send that this was going with the idea that I wanted something really compact that you could put in your pocket but it's still kind of a little too big for the average pocket

but it's it's also it has a few typos on the poly side I have to admit just a few

but that would that wouldn't matter mainly just to people that wanted to read the poly and were able to read the polling

so that's the way you know you can
download it off the internet
um from nepapuncha.org or the Wikipedia
or I assume there's probably other ways
of finding it out there or if you send
me your mailing address I can uh I can
send you a copy and that's it that was
the last question

so again

if you have any questions if I with
regard to anything that you think I
could answer like Buddhist philosophy
especially terrible Buddhist philosophy
Buddhist monasticism
um my own experiences in Burma or as a
monk

um you know just Burma I can I can
answer questions about that fairly
fairly well in most cases

um meditation Dharma in general stuff
like that if you think that uh I might
be able to give an informed answer on
the question uh feel free to ask in the
comments below

and uh be sure to uh check the links
below this video

where is my my URL links and also my the
books that I I'm selling on Amazon
and uh see what else

subscribe if you haven't already I'm not
too far away from a thousand which I
think is the uh the critical mass for
live streaming and uh give me a like if

you if you like and be happy

hello and welcome to episode 45 of
question and answer and I am your host

Ponyo Basa

and in honor of this being number 45 I'm
drinking this here

Peach flavored energy drink

which uh

as you may not be able to see actually
contains kamu kamu extract I have never
heard of it before but it's got this in
it and I'm sure it's good

it also has branched chain amino acids
but uh the main reason why I'm drinking
white peach energy drink for question
answer 45

is because

uh those of you who are familiar with
memeology and possibly who have read the
comments sections of Breitbart
during the Trump Administration May
realize that peach 45
was a very common refrain in those days
in certain circles
age 45 and 45 did get Peach he got
peached twice if you include the second
one which was actually invalid
but uh
also the camera is going to be bouncing
around because I'm sitting out on the
back the back deck because my sweetheart
is does not like me staying in the room
all the time
so I'm this is sort of a compromise

you'd prefer that I'd be like outdoors
with like the sun like in my eyes and
like insects and all sorts of things
that just totally distract me
so this is kind of a compromise but if
it was up to me I'd probably be back in
the same room as usual and uh
I just it just I feel more comfortable
there I guess
maybe it's maybe it helps to be a little
bit uncomfortable because it helps you
to be more alert or something but like
one of my uh I don't know I'd probably
call him a role model or not but sticks
hex and hammers 666 he he just stays in
this room he tells he does like one take

or at least the take that you see has
not been edited

and I think my favorite

um of his backgrounds was when he was
still in Vermont

and he just apparently was just sitting
in his kitchen with like a a Roman flag
with the spqr on the back behind him

I think he was still in the leather
jacket phase although he pretty much
usually wore shirts underneath it
but anyway

um we got lots of questions

in fact I think we might even have 45
questions which is uh doubly appropriate
and so I should just wade into this
without uh bothering you by talking

about

Peach 45.

and uh puppy shaking the camera and so
forth

so the first question is from Brave sir
Robin Alias Mary spelled m-e-r-r-y and
brave sir Robin says

what European country did your ancestors
come from do you know
well

Americans tend to be rather a Mongol
race there are very few pure blooded
American anything I think

but my mother's side of the family I
have been told is essentially 100
English

although the English themselves are kind
of a mongrel race too but their
mongrelness their mongrelhood
mongrelicity is uh just a mixture of
European tribes especially in the areas
of like northern Europe you know like
Angles and Saxons and Vikings and so
forth and some French maybe a little bit
of Latin like during the Roman Empire
there's probably a little bit of mixing
at that time

so yeah my mother's side of the family
I'm pretty sure is
pretty much 100 English my father's side
of the family is a little more eclectic
can you say that about ancestry
eclectic ancestry but he also I'm pretty

sure is mostly English maybe some
Scottish and a Teensy bit of Italian
mixed in and also I think there may be
like the one one one 1024th of American
Indian blood

but I'm mostly Anglo-Saxon

so

my last name also is Anglo-Saxon

and my mother's maiden name was Walker

which is totally English

so I'll just move on to the next

question oh I should say though before I

go to that on the next question my

sweetheart keeps wanting me to get my

DNA tested so I can get my ancestry like

scientifically verified or something but

first of all I do not want my genome on
some government register and secondly I
just know that if I were to get my
genome sequenced you know just get my
DNA

like recorded somewhere that within 50
years there's going to be an army of
Clone knees just wreaking havoc upon the
Earth

so

um yeah I'll just go with uh family
folklore family lore

and I'll just move on to the next
question this is also from Brave sir
Robin Alias Mary spelled m-e-r-r-y

there is a picture that you have it is
on the top shelf of the left side behind

you in that room is it your father and
as you can see I'm not in that room but
I brought a picture and it is this
and no that is not my father that is
neem karoli Baba
and he is my favorite Guru
despite the fact that he's a Hindu
and maybe I should just do a video all
about Indian curly Baba someday but one
thing I liked about neem curly Baba was
he was a rascal I mean he was like
just amazingly spiritually Advanced you
know he could look at you and know you
better than you know you just at a
glance this guy plus all these weird
stories of miracles about teleportation

and multiplication of his bodies into
more than more than one body
simultaneously and and just reading
minds and knowing the future and that
sort of thing

but for those of you who are unfamiliar
with him he was Ram das's Guru he was
the guru a number of other people
including Krishna Das and most of his
disciples wound up with the name ending
in DAS of the male disciples anyway and
Das means politely means servant
although Dasa in Pali anyway meant slave
and it was uh derived from dasu which
was a name describing the Aboriginal
inhabitants
of Northwestern India and like the Indus

River Valley when the indooorians invaded
so they're mentioned in the rig Veda as
Dasa or Dasio but since they were
enslaved they became it became a synonym
for slave much like the English word
slave came from slav because the Slavs
were enslaved a lot like in the Early
Middle Ages especially
so

yeah so it's neem curly Baba also known
as maharaji so I'll just move on to the
next question also from Mary spelled
m-e-o-r-y

if you die okay when you will die we all
gonna

what would it be your favorite way to go

so I mean if I could choose how I die
what would be my preferred way of dying
and it used to be

I mean for years I had it all worked out
you know if I could choose any way of
dying I would want to be bitten by a
17-foot king cobra three and a half
hours after ingesting 500 micrograms of
LSD

and since I haven't come up with any
replacement for that I guess just by
default that can still be the way just
in case you know people out there are
listening to this and

and uh they want to set that up for me
somehow when the time comes I remember
my father used to say that he wanted to

be shot by a jealous husband at the age
of 102 although that didn't come to pass
either but I mean the Cobra thing it
would be too hard to work out all the
logistics so I'm probably gonna have to
like go with some other method when the
time finally comes
so we'll just move on to the next
question and this is from dismas I think
that is how you pronounce this name it
is not a very
common name
in uh in the USA bismus
and dismiss says do we know for sure
that the monks today wear their robes
like the Buddha and his disciples used

to wear them and we know pretty sure
that they didn't

um I did a video just on monk robes
this was maybe a few months ago by now
again

and the main difference

is that monk robes in the Buddhist time
especially the upper robes were about
half the size of Monk robes now and so
they mostly just wore it flung over both
shoulders because there just wasn't
enough cloth to do it like the Tie Way
where they got it all wrapped around one
arm and everything there wasn't enough
cloth for that because it was just
half the size

um

I'm not exactly sure when
um theravada Buddhist monks
started wearing their robes twice the
size of what is really the allowable
size it part of it came from the idea
that I mean according to the rules
you're not allowed to have a robe as big
as the Buddha's own robe and the
Buddha's own robe was nine hand spans by
six hand spans according to the Buddha's
own hand and then the mythology started
evolving in Buddhism so that the Buddha
became three and a half times the height
of an ordinary human so that his hand
span was like Yay big and so the rule
became totally meaningless saying that

you can't wear a robe that's more than like 26 feet long or something that nobody would want to wear anywhere so yeah with regard to just fleeing it over one shoulder you know like uh a Burmese monk who's relaxed in his Monastery and just has his robe like over one shoulder and not wrapped around one arm or anything that's pretty much the way monks wore their robes some of the time especially when paying respects it does say that a monk should uncover uncover his right shoulder when he pays respect or like if he's making confession or something like that or if he's attending a formal ceremony just to show respect it was considered a sign of

respect probably in all of ancient India
not just among Buddhist monks so you
uncover the shoulder to show respect
kind of like in 19th century
um the West in in like 100 years or more
a man would take off his hat like a lady
enters the room or something like that
you know he takes off the cap
um so it's it's similar but not exactly
the same and mainly it's because
nowadays monk robes are especially the
upper robes are like twice as big as
they were in the Buddhist time so there
are some differences
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Rick

and Rick has asked a number of questions
that some of them are rather personal
but uh it's all fair game I suppose

Peach 45

Rick says I've heard you mention that
you went as far as you could as a monk
but that said how much of a role did
your sweetheart play had you and had you
not met her and presumably fell in love
would you still be donning the robes
um if I hadn't met my sweetheart and
fallen in love with her and left and
come to where she lives to be with her
um if I were still in robes right now
I'd be in all likelihood stagnating and
wondering what I should do
um I mean you can't you can't really say

what would happen if things were done differently because you don't know you know what would actually happen but that's the feeling I get I'd just be stagnating just what the hell am I going to do

but fortunately for me

um we met you know when I was still a monk and uh it was just like this chemistry we just we just clicked we have sort of a group mind thing going which is kind of strange sometimes and uh yeah she did she did help me but um

um I mean if if I was still making progress in the monk Hood I probably

would have just stayed in Burma and and
wouldn't have come to America and
started staying at a LAX Burmese
Monastery and and just messing around
online with meme farming and minds.com
and stuff

so ultimately the reason why I left the
bunker was I just really did just get as
far as I could with it

so we'll just move on to the next
question from Rick how would you compare
your faith in Buddhism as a junior monk
to now well I was much more literal
minded back then much more idealistic
and naive I think
compared to now

um

I understand things a lot better which like has influenced my attitude towards Buddhism like just really taking the the sutas of the Attica Wagga to Heart except for the Tissa Mateo which is talking about how a monk should not drop out of the monk hood and start having sexual relations with ladies um but aside from that with regard to like the philosophical mind States um I'm better at it now than I was as a junior Monk um yeah I was just very idealistic and literal minded with regard to understanding the text to the point of just being naive

and it's something that you have to
learn through your own experience some
monks apparently don't they just stay
like unquestioning faith-oriented
dogmatists just from start to finish but
I just don't swing that way
so I'll just move on to Rick's next
question

what would you say to a person preparing
to go forth and take up the robes any
words of wisdom or caution I remember
when I told uh

a Zen roshi that I was planning on
ordaining as a monk and he said I am
happy for you and I'm sorry for you
which is kind of a Zen thing to say but
I mean it is applicable

um you know it's living amongst life
isn't all just peaches

Peach 45

I mean it's you know it's definitely got
its it's good sides and it's it's dark
sides or it's good points and it's not
so good points

but with regard to someone wanting to go
forth and take up the robes first of all
I would uh advise them to investigate
different monasteries and the habits of
different monasteries or senior monks of
different monasteries and find one that
they think is strict that adheres you
know fairly closely to what the Buddha
originally taught that has a wise

teacher and if you can ordain in Asia I would advise any Junior Monk that they should spend at least two years in a Buddhist culture in Asia where they can walk for alms they can sleep under trees in a tropical forest that kind of thing because it's really invaluable it helped me immensely and it also helps you to understand the sutas because if you're living in the same general kind of environment with a similar kind of culture you can understand the context of of the the Buddhist text much more easily than if you're sitting in New York City or something so yeah that would be my main words of wisdom

um

you know just carefully investigate
different monasteries find one with a
wise teacher that you trust that has
relatively strict winning like the monks
don't handle money you need to get rid
of your money before you ordain
um you know study up on the Monk's rules
a little bit just so you'll have some
idea of what you're getting yourself
into

uh

and good luck because really I mean it's
it's definitely much I mean it's
designed the Monk's life is designed to
help you progress in wisdom and to get

you enlightened so

um if you really have your heart set on
it you know it's it's better to become a
monk than to try to practice as a
layperson especially at first

um

so yeah I mean I wouldn't try to talk
anybody out of it unless it's pretty
clear that they're doing it for a dumb
reason or they have no intention of of
being a strict conscientious monk or
something like that

so I'll just move on to the next
question from Rick

how did you and Brian Rue come into
contact with each other have you ever
met in person or just online I stumbled

across the two of you a few months ago
by searching the word Monk on a
different platform YouTube won't allow
me to say which one without deleting my
comment rhymes with wit hoot yeah I can
understand that I really enjoy the
contrast and chemistry between the two
of you yeah hail Bryan
well the first interaction between Brian
and me
occurred shortly after I came back to
America I thought for good in 2011. I
was really just flinging myself into
America I felt like I just had enough of
Burma time to interact with with like
Western people to speak my language and

think sort of like me

and so I landed in Bellingham Washington

and so I just contacted the Dharma

teachers in the you know within 100

miles of Bellingham that included

Vancouver British Columbia also Seattle

Washington and everywhere in between

and um Brian was like a mainstream

Normie Dharma teacher back then he

hadn't gotten into trouble and gotten

fired from his his teaching job and

everything

and uh so I just sent him an email you

know just saying you know I'm Buddhist

monk who's landed nearby and uh you know

just offering my services and he wrote a

polite email back to me saying that uh

you know he was kind of living from hand to mouth as it was he really didn't have the facilities for guests teachers and so forth and that was it that was that was all there was and then uh a few years later after both of us had been red pillled

um he I'm not exactly sure I think someone who followed my blog

um

suggested to him that he contact me and so Brian contacted me asking me if I would be like the spiritual leader of his dual Society

and uh the school of society was sort of like a Redux of an older School society

that was in Germany uh pre-hitler

foreign

but

um I mean I looked through it and I just

said well yeah I really shouldn't be

becoming the spiritual leader of the

school Society but I was available for

doing videos so that was how we started

doing like lots of videos we've done pro

well up into triple digits of videos

together most of them are not on my

YouTube feed you'd have to find them on

Brian's bit shoot feed which you're not

supposed to say rhymes with who yeah

it's weird how YouTube is just trying to

um enforce ignoring [__] you like I

gotta

um this is a digression by the way but I got this little questionnaire from from YouTube Once asking like what other video platforms do I do I use or watch and had a list of a bunch of them bit shoot which would be the obvious alternate to YouTube or one of the most obvious it wasn't even on the list so I'm just telling you say why you just leave it out completely I mean it's just such obvious ridiculous bias but uh yeah that's how I met Brian Russo I'll just move on to Rick's next question as regard to rules for monks do you think they are all necessary if you were

in charge are there any rules you would
do away with any you would add
well

um it is said that shortly before the
Buddha died he did give permission that
the Lesser and minor rules and
discipline could be done away with
although he did not specify what it was
he told this to his his cousin and
attendant Ananda
and then Ananda caught hell from it from
for not asking him to specify what he
meant by the Lesser and minor rules of
discipline so they just decide we're not
going to change any of it and I mean
obviously not all of them are necessary
especially now maybe in Ancient India in

you know the the Iron Age Ganges Valley
all of them are there for a good reason
but some of them nowadays are just
completely obsolete there's no point
like it's against the rules to use a
human skull as a as an arms ball you
know to make an almost ball out of a
human skull which nobody would want to
do

um a lot of the rules regarding Bulls
are old enough that they just assume
that amongst bull is going to be made
out of clay and very few monks have Clay
bowls anymore so all the rules about how
you have to take special care of this
bowl you're not supposed to set it up on

on a high place like a table because if it falls off it breaks you're not supposed to open or close the door with a bowl in your hand because if it knocks against the door it can break you know there's rules about how many cracks the bowl can have before you can replace it and almost all bowls now are made out of iron or stainless steel they just don't break so all these rules are just obsolete essentially and the one about you're not allowed to open or close the door with a bowl in your head it's just a pain in the ass especially in Asia where there's anopheles mosquitoes outside and you've got to open the door you've got to set your bowl down you

can't just set it on the floor you have to set it on a pad or something so that the black finish doesn't get scraped you open the door then you pick up the bowl you walk through the doorway you set it down but again you have to set it down on something other than the floor itself and then after you set the bowl down you close the door behind you and meanwhile like four or five anopheles mosquitoes have flown into your cabin so

yeah there are rules that are just I mean some of them are just obsolete like it's against the rules to offer food with your own hands to a naked

aesthetic like an ajivaka and the ajiva
because they're extinct now there might
be a few de gambora Janes still walking
around naked in India but um yeah it's
it's obsolete

um so they're not really all necessary
but once you start messing around with
we're going to get rid of these rules or
those rules then you just flung the door
wide open you've opened Pandora's Box
and then you're gonna have fools

no the dogs are stampeding you can have
fools that are just saying well we don't
want any of these sexist patriarchal
rules and then you know everything just
goes into the dumper

um

the the last part of this question any
you would add yeah when I was a monk I
was grateful for veneer because really
it does sort of regiment your life and
it keeps your life kind of simple and
quiet

and um

so there were there were rules where
like you know it might have been helpful
to have a rule against cussing because
there's no rule against cussing there's
a rule like for for nuns that it's
against the rules for an it's a pachidia
offense I think for a nun to curse
herself while beating her chest you know
like

well I won't do I won't say it but I
mean it's not against the rules for
monks to to curse

um like

there are there are certain things you
can get away with that

um you know it just slips between the
cracks or or else it's something to do
with modern times that they just hadn't
thought that you know modern technology
would come up with you know copyright
theft or something like that

so

yeah I might add a few extra ones I
wouldn't dare to take any away although
some of them really are obsolete but the
obsolete ones I mean you don't have to

worry about them because you can't break them anymore but the rules about monk Bulls back when monk bowls were made out of clay and now they're not made out of clay anymore those really are they can be a pain in the neck

so next question from Rick

when was the last time you voted will you be voting in the next presidential election yeah last time I voted was the last last election day made a special point of going and voting

although it's kind of unnecessary in South Carolina because it's a firmly conservative kind of state and that's what the way it's going to end up

that's the way the the vote you know the election is going to wind up anyway but you know it's it's I consider it to be like my

civic duty as an American citizen to vote so yeah I even voted when I was a monk although I'm kind of regret to say I have voted for Obama or rather I voted against Mitt Romney

um I watched one as a monk

uh this was like 2011 or so

I watched the presidential debate

between Obama and Romney and it it

seemed pretty obvious that Obama was at

a higher level of Consciousness in law

Romney just struck me as some kind of

shark with like a plastic smile glued to

its face but I mean nowadays I I

couldn't be in good conscience vote for

either of them

yeah I will I will be voting in the next

presidential election God will the God's

willing

so I'll just move on to Rick's next

question

and he says

I've heard you mention that Buddhism and

Karma are all about mindset that said If

a person were to commit acts of violence

in which they felt Justified meaning

they didn't feel bad at all weren't

angry at all just did what they felt

ought to be done do you think they would

suffer the same karmic retribution as
one that acted in anger or out of hatred
or one who regretted the acts
um that is a good question and
um the karma definitely will be
different like let's say let's just go
with like a small example of a mosquito
is biting you and one person it just
goes like
and then and that's it he just continues
with his conversation or reading his
book or whatever it was he was doing
whereas the other one is just you little
[__] you know you know they're just
like
cursing with rage as they're smashing
the little bastard

um you know there'd be a different Karma there and I mean both of them would get the karma for knowingly and willingly killing another being it might just be like a little

tiny little Karma I don't think anyone would go to hell for that but um the person who acts out of anger also gets uh karma for the anger

but like for example I mean you if you have like islamist terrorists who blow up a School Bus full of kids and think they're gonna go to heaven for that you know they're happy about that you know they're slapping each other on the back saying Allahu Akbar and all that

um they're still going to get bad karma
for that even though they might think
that you know they've done something
good they're going to go to heaven
because it's not all at the surface the
way Karma works is mostly subconscious
and at the subconscious level there is a
certain amount of interconnectedness
between us where you can you you have
like a certain empathy for what the
other person is going through and at the
surface level you might be just totally
superficial and just oblivious to what's
going on at the deeper levels but it's
still there
so if you're deliberately causing
suffering or Mayhem

um even up if at the surface you're just dissociated from the deeper levels of your own mind then I mean still the deeper levels are still there even though I'll be damn philosophy does not acknowledge deeper levels of consciousness

but nevertheless I mean it's it's fairly clear that such things exist and I'm trying to hold the table down because the dog's running back and forth or making it

Shake all over the place

so

um yeah I think that I mean

here's a good example it's a movie the

movie called A Clockwork Orange Stanley
Kubrick's A Clockwork Orange where
you've got um these this gang the drugs
who are just
raping women to death and beating people
up and just committing all kinds of just
outrageous and they're just laughing
uproariously while they're doing it but
it's kind of a like an ape like hooting
kind of laughter that they're indulging
in and in a way it's like a defense
mechanism against the deeper awareness
of their own mind it's really some good
psychology there where they're just like
hooting as a way of just kind of
drowning out their own conscience
and a lot of that I think a lot of

Allahu akbars might be that way too not
that I'm just trying to pick on islamist
terrorists but there aren't a whole lot
of other famous terrorists around
anymore especially since the ones in
Ireland have settled down

so

uh there was another example I was going
to give see

oh uh not so much an example but one
time I did ask one of my teachers I was
a junior monk at the time

um I asked about this kind of question
it's like who makes worse Karma like
somebody who kills an animal

um knowing that you know let's say

they're a Buddhist and they already know
that there's bad karma involved or
something or someone who's just
considers it to be good clean fun you
know fishing in America is just
considered to be something good you know
Jesus himself helped people to kill fish
a lot of his disciples supposedly were
were fishermen

so

what about that and then my teacher said
that if you know something's hot before
you touch it

you're more likely to touch it carefully
so that you don't burn yourself as bad
so what he was saying was if you know
that something is wrong and you do it

anyway that in a way you kind of are cautious about it or careful about it and you're not going to be you know whooping and yeah this is great kind of stuff but it can go either way it really does depend on mental States but it's not just the the surface mental States because there is like interconnectedness between conscious beings below the conscious level and some gurus like neem curly Baba had access to those levels and that's how he could just take one look at you and know right where you were at spiritually and you know see

your past lives or whatever

so let's see

okay and then at the end here it says or

one who regretted the actual regretting

the acts is just a whole different Act

you commit an act and then you regret

the act the regret is just making more

Bad Karma in addition to what was

already there and that's kind of the way

it works and I've got the puppy here's

uh wanting attention

yeah so I'll just move on to Rick's next

question

do you know of any monks who disrobed

after being a monk for as long as you is

it common to disrobe after such a long

time well it's not really common for a

monk to even be among for 30 or more
years

um but I think I have met a few there's
there's a French monk whose name I don't
recall

but he had Rich parents he was a monk
for well over 20 years I think it was
like 30 years his par his Rich parents
died and left him this Legacy and for a
while he was trying to train like uh
like an attendant on how to deal with
the money so he didn't have to handle it
but eventually he just gave up and
dropped out and then
um after a few years I heard that he
dropped back in again so he's a monk

again now I think assuming that he's
still alive

um I heard that there was a a Japanese
monk in the ajan cha tradition this
French monk also was in the ajan cha
tradition

um

that I think he was relatively senior
mom too he lived in Thailand and I think
he might have had at least 30 Wausau
before he dropped out

um I remember when I was a junior monk
this is like back in the 90s
there was just this wave of monks
dropping out like senior monks dropping
out of the ajan Shah tradition
most of them didn't have 30 Watts

although but it was it was a serious problem because the ajan cha tradition was had the potential to spread at a good rate you know it was setting up new monsters and everything and then all these ajons dropped out at around the same time within a year or two like there was a book called like seeing the way or something it was a collection of sermons like transcribed sermons from senior monks in the ajan cha tradition and it was like two-thirds to three-fourths of them had dropped out even at the time that I read the book which was maybe late 90s so yeah I mean it happens a lot it I've

been told that in Thailand uh a monk
will start being called odd John after
he's been a monk for only about five
years just because most of them just
don't last that long in Thailand
um

but in Burma monks that have been monks
for 50 years are really not all that
uncommon I remember I've been among for
20 something years and I went to a
ceremony to attend a ceremony

um and I was it was

in order of it was a water now ceremony
most of you don't know what that means
it doesn't even matter but it was we
were sitting in order of seniority and
even though I'd been a monk for at least

25 years at the time I was like halfway
back from the front

but monks like that generally don't drop
out some of them have been monks and
children I mean they they were novices
ordained as children and then they
become fully ordained Monks at the age
of 19 or 20.

and um they just don't know anything
else it just they couldn't really drop
out they wouldn't know how to do it
so I'll just move on to Rick's next
questions

what are your thoughts on paying taxes
to a government that uses tax revenue to
fund the harm of others well if they're

fun if they're harming others I mean
that's on them

um if you're just paying taxes in order
to stay out of prison
then

in a way it's kind of extortion really
if you're paying taxes I mean you can
just be like thorough and just be
willing to go to prison for not paying
taxes until your friends pay them for
you just so you don't have to go to
prison but

um

yeah I mean

um

even even the Buddhists I mean the
Buddha had sort of a a similar dictum to

Jesus saying you know pay under Caesar
what belongs to Caesar pay under God
what belongs to God the Buddha just said
I allow monks you I allow you monks to
obey Kings

and the government is the king so if
they say you got to pay taxes um yeah
you're probably better off paying the
taxes even though they're going to use
them to make drones that blow up
cars with innocent children in them and
so forth

Peach 45

with kamu kamu extract and I can feel
the kamukamo extract actually starting
to kick in at this point

so I'll just move on to Rick's uh next
and last question although not the last
question of this q a by by a long shot
and he says I once joked that Buddhism
says all life is suffering because it
forbids all pleasure do you think there
is a measure of cowardice in retreating
from both good and bad in order to
reduce the bad should we not just accept
that every light casts its shadow and
take the good with the bad
well that's a that's a reasonable
question

um although with regard to the joke it
says all life is suffering because it
forbids all pleasure well
um that's not exactly true because some

Pleasures you just can't avoid I mean a sunny day with the bird singing is nice and you can't you can't really forbid that you know getting a good night's sleep well getting any sleep is is more pleasant than not being able to sleep taking a bath is nice you know and also the Bliss of meditation eating food is nice

so Buddhism doesn't forbid all pleasure it just forbids unnecessary pleasure let's see I knew I think there is a measure of cowardice in retreating from both good and bad in order to reduce about it depends on the individual um yeah some people maybe they just you

know the the world is just too much for
them they're it's just scary and so they
seek refuge in a monastery yeah I mean
there might be some cowardice in that
but there's two ways of looking at the
goal of Buddhism one is more heart
oriented and more feminine and the other
is more head oriented and more masculine
and

trying to become enlightened in order to
escape suffering and Badness is more of
the heart-oriented feminine approach
whereas trying to become enlightened to
eliminate delusion you know to to
realize Ultimate Reality that would be a
more head-oriented more stereotypically
masculine approach and they're both the

same enlightenment

so I mean when you reduce positive and

negative so you've got smooth sailing

you've got sort of like a flat comb on

the water then you're able to penetrate

through that and see the Ultimate

Reality that that underlies it

so it's not necessarily cowardice I mean

Mahayana Buddhists were all calling

um the hinianists the in the followers

of the inferior vehicle you know cowards

and selfish and so forth but it's what

the Buddha taught and I don't think the

Buddha was a coward and if you think

about what monks in the Buddhist time

went through you know just like I mean I

can tell you from my own experience just sleeping under a tree in a forest that is known to have tigers and leopards and wild elephants and so forth wild boars I mean you're not a coward I mean most people just couldn't do it not that I'm trying to brag that yeah I can do what most people can't do but but still I mean it takes it takes a certain amount of courage and just toughness to be an aesthetic you know living in a cemetery strewn with corpses for example or just wandering around not knowing what you're going to eat that day where you're going to sleep that night I mean it takes a certain amount of courage and so it's not exactly cowardice I mean but

like I say some monks that are just
overwhelmed by
empirical reality and want to hide out
in a monastery and don't want suffering
because it's scary or bad or whatever
yeah maybe cowardice is a factor in
that

so I'll just move on to the next
question

and this is from

CEO of X and sipad zidana

and I still don't know if I'm
pronouncing that correctly but

I pronounce it with facility anyway

so a CEO of actions says

I heard the Buddhist monks were

relatively sharp looking clothes to make
them look more dignified compared to
many monks walking around naked or
wearing blankets made of human hair
if this is the case then wouldn't the
textile Revolution making clothing much
cheaper make it just a show-off to wear
robes that now seem so outdated it keeps
the tradition but not the spirit anymore
due to Changing Times

thoughts

thoughts question mark

well I mean it's not true that Buddhist
monks were relatively sharp looking
clothes to make them look more dignified
because for the first few decades I'm
pretty sure at least according to

tradition monks wore robes made out of
Rags they would find Rags lying on the
ground or in some cases they'd find like
Burial shrouds at a cemetery and then
they'd make those into ropes you know
they'd sew them together dye them and
wear that and so

wearing Rags as a general rule is not
very dignified although There Are Rules
saying that a monk should wear them
neatly you know I mean you should look
dignified even though you're dressed in
rags

um

so yeah I mean it wasn't it wasn't any
kind of ostentation it wasn't for quite

a while until the Buddha finally allowed
or his maybe even after he died and then
they just sort of anti-dated it that
you're allowed to accept good cloth from
from lay people like as gifts

um there is a I mentioned

um now my dog is barking out in the yard

I did mention that um you can among

could use burial shrouds and that would

probably be a good way of getting some

fairly a fairly good piece of good cloth

you know a big one

um there is a rule saying that you have

to wait until the body's been dead for I

think it's at least a day

I can't remember the exact time period

but it I mean it has to be like really

dead before you can take the Shroud off
because there's the story of a monk who
took the Shroud off of uh uh he
unwrapped this freshly dead corpse that
was freshly deposited at this uh Charnel
field and um the body the spirit hadn't
completely left the body and so it
reinhabited the body and he started
getting chased by this zombie that
resented having the the cloth taken off
of it

um

so let's get to the second part of this
after such an interesting digression
there
wouldn't the textile Revolution making

clothing much cheaper make it just to
show off to where robes that now seem so
outdated

it's a tradition but not the spirit
anymore due to Changing Times thoughts
well I mean it's like the uniform now
I mean really it is kind of obsolete but
it's just like a tradition it's just the
uniform it's like just about every
um kind of ordained clergy in the world
has some kind of uniform that they wear
maybe some like Protestant sects they
just wear lay clothing it doesn't matter
you know you got Pastor Bob or whatever
yeah we got dogs running back and forth
shaking the camera

um

yeah I mean it's really not a big deal
it's just such a superficial thing
um but yeah if if the Buddha were alive
today and setting up like some something
that the monk should wear they might be
wearing something more like I'm wearing
now like sweatpants and a wife beater
than these large rectangles of cloth
that were essentially what the lay
people wore too except they were white
and not cut into pieces and sung back
together

so I'll just move on to covax and cpad
zidana's next question

what is the Orthodox teravada idea of
nebana you said it rejects ideas of

boundless Consciousness like in mesutas
but it still accepts it as the
unconditioned I don't understand what
the terravada position is on it and
that's fairly that's that's
understandable that you don't understand
the official Orthodox terabata position
on the bottom because really they've
messed up the Orthodox tradition like
from abhidham and the commentaries they
don't know how to deal with nibana
because they're so Scholastic they want
everything classified and systematized
and nibana just is off the scale and
they're trying to fit it into the system
when it just won't fit
so the Orthodox terrible idea of nibana

first of all it is an Ultimate Reality
it is one of four ultimate realities in
fact if you multiply some of the
ultimate realities out into the various
ultimately real distinct categories like
matter or mental States then you've got
what is it 152 it's been a long time I
think it's 152 ultimate realities with
nibana being just one of them you know
so they fit it right into the system
where it shouldn't be at all and they
don't know how to describe it you know
it's it's the principle of cessation
that's like one of the main
um definitions that you'll find in
Orthodox caravada that nibbana is the

principle of cessation

but cessation I mean cessation is just something ceases it takes one moment to cease maybe less than a moment you know it's just the end of a moment when and there's nothing there after that and

um it's interesting If Only from an anthropological point of view to read there's a famous little booklet um that's by mahasi Seattle venerable mahasi Seattle about nibana what is nibana

and I mean he's just doing his best he was a brilliant scholar in addition to being a a some sort of meditation master um and just trying to make sense of like

ancient Indian Scholastic bungling of
nibana or Nirvana

and I'm sorry to say that I mean I
shouldn't be so blatantly disrespectful
but really

early taravana Buddhism like the
abhidham era and then the commentarial
you know commentarial tradition after
that

um they just did not know how to deal
with abhidhamum because they want uh
with nibana I mean because they want it
to be fit into this system you know they
got to be able to explain it and you
can't explain it because it's completely
off the scale it's not part of samsara

but all language is part of samsara

so

you know about the best they can do is

they say it's one of you know more than

a hundred ultimate realities including

like tongue sensitivity or or

cohesiveness things like that it's no

more real than that supposedly

but it is unconditioned it has no

beginning and no end

so at least they get that part

but they really don't know how to deal

with it and uh probably the less abidama

you know the better because like uh

venerable Nana Vera used to say the less

Abby dummy you know the better because

it's the less you have to unlearn in

order to really understand dama
although I don't not so sure he
understood all that well either
so yeah

yeah maybe I should just move on to the
next one I might be digging myself into
a hole with that one

until the next question from the CEO of
action Cod zidane is

in the dhamapata verses 19 to 20 it says
although a man may know much about the
sacred text but acts not accordingly
that heedless man is like a Cowherd who
only counts the cows of others but he
does not partake of the blessings of the
Holy life although he knows little about

the sacred texts but puts the teaching into practice forsaking lust hatred and delusion with true wisdom and emancipated mind clinging to nothing of this or any other world he indeed partakes of the blessings of the Holy life and the commentary to this verse tells the story of two friends with one becoming a scholar and the other meditating due to old age and not having time for being a scholar the young scholar became famous for his teaching and attained nothing while the meditator became an arahant given the dhamapada is one of the most famous texts in Buddhism how do you think Buddhism still went down the rabbit hole

of scholasticism

Etc and people devoting their whole lives to debating and studying various Topics in Buddhism seems this verse an Associated story predicted people would do this thousands of years ago and wanted to prevent that but somehow it still failed

well the ancient Indians were somewhat similar to Modern westerners in that they were really trying to figure out reality

they were more introverted than that you know they were looking inwards instead of outwards like modern scientists do but still they just couldn't get away

from wanting to like systematize and
organize and you know make rules and
laws that everything has to follow
and uh I guess the ideal situation would
be like mahasi Seattle that I that I
just mentioned who was a brilliant
scholar but also a meditation Master
lady Seattle another famous Seattle from
100 years ago or more in Burma was like
that also he was

I mean he he mastered the text you know
he was definitely a brilliant scholar
but he also like meditative intensively
and practiced intensively and was strict
in following vanilla and so forth but
um it's it's like I was saying in a
recent video with regard to archaic

Buddhism that archaic Buddhism first of all was dedicated primarily to Advanced practitioners and after Buddhism became more popular became more of a national religion

um people that were beginners were flooding in including just intellectual types that just wanted to understand reality

just intellectually

and so I mean it's just

in a way it's just human nature it's

just inevitable that that sort of thing

is going to happen it happens with

pretty much every system probably even

Islam went through phases of that where

they're trying to just you know make everything Scholastic and formalized um but yeah there have been warnings I mean in the in the commentaries you know that are written by these Scholars that probably didn't meditate very much you know they're still recording these stories of you know monks that are belittled by the Buddha for you know spending all their time you know memorizing texts which is kind of an anachronism because there probably weren't Tech many texts to memorize in Buddhist time so let's see let's see uh just trying to figure just try to see if I answered this question

it seems this person associated story predicted people would do this thousands of years ago I wanted to prevent that but somehow still failed yeah it's just human nature I mean you can warn against it and I'm sure the warnings have saved some people like ajan Shah he's a good example he started off as a scholar monk you know he was like a a teacher in some Buddhist monastic school and then from reading the texts and realizing that he was not practicing what he preached you know he wasn't walking his own talk that you know it caused him to just drop out of of Buddhist Academia and just go into the forest and start meditating which is

you know the best thing that a monk can
do

so yeah I think I'll just move on to CEO
of action cpad zidane's next question

and he says I assume it to be

you always say be happy at the end of

your videos however you have said

previously you can't have the goal

without the good without the bad

I misread that you can't have the

Goodwill the bad so it so does that mean

you are also implying we should have

negative mental States as well by saying

we should be happy well in the text like

like um The Meta suto you know one of

the refrains is May all beings be happy

be happy minded

um Buddhist happiness that is like
wholesome happiness is different from
um like positive you know giddiness you
know it's like positive or just
giddiness or or just you know pleasure
you know the happiness of experiencing
pleasure

um you know has an opposite you know
there's the unhappiness of feeling pain
whereas the happiness that that like is
um

that is part of the blessing in in the
metā sūta and the metāsūta is recited
as a blessing many many times that it's
it's just more like contentment you know
it's like peace of mind that kind of

happiness which is a superior kind of
Happiness to the the upper parts of the
roller coaster ride that are inevitably
going to have the the lower parts of the
roller coaster ride

so it's just sort of the smooth sailing
of calm Waters no ups and downs or a few
you know easily manageable ups and downs
that would be uh considered like a
superior kind of happiness

so that's the kind of happiness that I'm
I'm encouraging when I say be happy

so I'll just move on to Sea of Action

sipad zidane's next question

and I haven't received any

um

praise for how easily I've I've been

able to pronounce that name not that I'm
fishing for compliments very much
kamukamu extract hardly recommended
so the next question I had the thought
that in previous generations there was a
lot of spreading of hate against men
from feminists in the West feminists
so they were reborn as males who
remember hating males now or hating
males in the past life but can now never
be the gender they want in their life
now
they are forced to become the thing they
spent their whole life hating with a
longing to be their old gender do you
think this can explain the massive rise

of gender dysphoria in modern Western society as it just being a wepaka from or as it just being a wepaka from their karma and previous life on a society-wide scale well that's kind of an interesting question and although it doesn't fit 100 what he's referring to here I had a supporter in Burma who was biologically female and I mean she really was anti she was like an anti-feminist um I mean she was single there's I would pity any man that would marry this woman she was sort of like the Apache Warchief Geronimo and female form

what she she told me these stories about
when she was a little girl and she
showed me pictures like family pictures
when she was a little girl she'd always
have her back turned to the camera
because she was so ashamed of being a
girl if they put girls clothes on her
she'd start crying she wouldn't let them
put any kind of like uh in Burma even
little girls who wear this Stunna cut
bark makeup which is sort of like a
sunscreen in addition to being
decorative she just would not allow it
she'd just stand there crying until they
wiped it back off of her and it seemed
pretty obvious to me that she had been

like a a male in a previous life
assuming that there there is such a
phenomenon as rebirth and it may be that
she was so bigoted and she was bigoted
in this life too in certain ways you
know she was so you know anti like a
misogynist or something that has a kind
of karmic punishment she wound up being
born as a female in this life and I
think you know assuming that there is
such a thing as rebirth and Karma that
that would be uh that would seem to fit
the case fairly well but in this case
I've never really thought about it that
way and it I don't think feminism has
been around that long for I mean it may
be that

um just man-hating feminists have been
around a lot enough that you know
they're sort of being reborn now with
this man-hating momentum going
but I think the gender dysphoria stuff
partly is due to the breakdown of
society where it's becoming more liminal
and I've talked about liminality is
you're sort of at a threshold and you
know you're you're verging out of like
the the structure of normality that
helps hold things together so that when
you deviate from Norms it creates this
kind of a threshold that uh allows
weirdness to come into this world and to
some degree it's like that where like

male and female obviously you know the distinction between male and female is almost totally breaking down especially on the left

and that is causing a great deal of confusion and it may be also karmically you know accepting Karma and rebirth that it's causing people with like males with a lot of feminine traits to kind of get born into a female body or vice versa or just just more transitions from male to female

that you know it's just causing a lot of Confusion And I think a lot of it is just artificial too A lot of the gender dysphoria is just promoted you know it's in fashion to have gender dysphoria so

there's a lot of that too

but that's my best attempt to answering
that question I shouldn't spend too much
time on these because since as I say I
think I got 45 questions to answer so
the next question from Co vac and sipad
zidana

and also his last one

but again not the last question my long
shot

he says in Buddhism it said volition is
Karma and we Paka

say oh okay in Buddhism it said volition
is Karma and wepaka are the fruits that
come from that in Jainism it doesn't
matter what the intention was and that

the results of your actions also matter
for what fruits of Your Action will be
how do these Concepts differ from the
brahmic later Hindu ideas of karma is
it similar to one of these or is it
different

uh yeah it's true like in Buddhism

uh karma is essentially will or volition
in Pali in Jainism volition is included
but they include all acts which includes
like physical verbal and mental

so

uh so in Jainism even if you
accidentally step on an ant you're
getting bad karma for that which is why
Jains will have like a soft grass broom
that they'll sweep the ground in front

of them so they won't accidentally step
on bugs they'll wear like a a covid mask
so they won't accidentally inhale bugs
because they'll get bad karma even for
accidentally killing a bug

um yeah Buddhism doesn't go that far
with regard to Hinduism let's go to
Modern Hinduism it's my understanding
that it's sort of intermediate between
Buddhism where it's purely mental or
essentially purely mental and Jainism
where I mean the mental aspect is almost
irrelevant

um in like early brahmanism they they
didn't have like invading early Vedic
times regardless of these claims you're

going to see like on YouTube videos that you know the The Vedas had already fully developed you know that their Spirit the whole spirituality you know that you know the people that were composing The Vedas they already knew about you know Atman and Brahman being identical and so forth

yeah I'm not so sure but I'm very skeptical of that let's say

um I've read stories that there are two different theories of how the idea of karma arose in Indian spiritual

Traditions one is that it was a PR it came before invading Hinduism or or

vaidism you know brahmanism that it came from the Indus Valley Civilization

and uh you know the Indus Valley

Civilization apparently had this more or less atheistic

uh religion or maybe you know number of sects that close that more closely

resembled like Jainism Buddhism sankya

um that sort of thing where

um we're like trapped in this world due to the impurity of Our Own

Karma or the impurity of our own soul

and we have to purify our souls so that

we can get out of this world and go up

and do some Heaven Realm

and that that's that's where the idea of

karma came from it was certain acts make

you more impure and certain acts make

you less impure

and then the other explanation for the

other Theory or or hypothesis for the

origin of of karma came from the the

ancient Vedic sacrifices it was Karma

literally means act or action which

includes like a formal Act

like uh in in Pali Kama vacha is like a

formal Act of the Sangha vacha means

speech comma is like the act the act of

of speech is it's still like a formal

oh

anyway

so in in that according to that theory

Karma arose from you have to do the

sacrifice

just right in order for it to be

efficacious you know if you want the
gods to do this you have to recite the
the like the the chance the hymns
perfectly you have to go through all the
formal ceremonies perfectly if you mess
it up you've got to start back at the
beginning again
you know if you met you if you're
reciting this verse from the rig Veda at
this fire sacrifice and you slur your
words or you get a word wrong
that nullifies you've got to start back
at the beginning again
and that's kind of an idea of karma
where your behavior causes like
uh effects like at a spiritual level

and then from there it just kind of
possibly from the influence of the the
pre-vadic spiritual Traditions that were
already in India that it may have
resulted in the gradual evolution of
this idea of Karma and um yeah I'm
pretty sure that I mean I'm no expert on
Hinduism

but um I'm pretty sure that Hinduism
nowadays is sort of intermediate between
the you know it's it's essentially will
from Buddhism or

even just an unconscious unintentional
Act is making Karma you know like like a
Jane accidentally stepping on an ant
but I'm no expert on
on Hinduism at least with regard to

certain things like

um what karma is considered to be

exactly by Hindus nowadays

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from Trump is

and Trump Assad bus says

how do you think a Buddhist should

address or interact with taravada be

coonies

some say they have been validly ordained

and others disagree and say they are not

however may they still be considered

novices if you don't see them as fully

ordained what is a respectful way to

address them as a seminary

well you called him sister I guess

that's the way nuns are called in the
West

pretty sure

I Peach 45.

um it seems to me that some research
should be done preferably unbiased
research you know somebody who doesn't
have an ax to grind to look into the
ordination procedure
of the Dharma gupitica
ordinations of nuns I mean Trump Assad
but the next question by Trump assafa
gets into this Dharma gupitica thing
um so maybe I should just wait but I
won't because I mean there should be
some investigation by experts on
monastic discipline to look at the

actual ordination procedure of these
nuns calling themselves bikunis
and see if it's a valid procedure
because

I'm not so sure that Dharma guptica
ordination would be similar enough to
the polyterovadan ordination procedure
that they would be considered that it
would be considered valid just to begin
with also since

um the ordination was occurring in what
Taiwan or Korea or something I mean were
they even doing it in a pure manner it
seems like a stretch to me it seems very
unlikely that in Taiwan or Korea they
would be reciting ancient Sanskrit texts

to ordain nuns and they'd be doing it
strictly according to the to the
monastic discipline of ancient India
that I mean if you pronounce words wrong
even it's considered invalid
which is generally why in Burma they
have three monks all chanting the same
thing simultaneously just to increase
the odds that at least one of them is
going to get it right without messing up
the words sort of like the you know the
The Vedic priests the brahmanas in in
Vedic times you know if they messed up
the the chant you know it made it
invalid
so that would be like a way of getting
to the bottom of this of course the

people biased one way or the other most
of them will probably just reject the
findings

you know like they find out that it
really is not valid you know it's not
even uh pure Dharma guptica ordination
then of course the leftists aren't going
to give a [__] because that's not the
point what the what I mean the way
people

I mean if they want something to be true
they're just going to find any
reasonable semi plausible justification
for it and if that falls through they're
just going to look for another
justification for it or maybe they don't

even need a justification
other than that's what they want
so that would I mean I'm not really
answering this question but in a way I
am because it's you're going to find out
if they could even plausibly be
considered to be really be coneys
but if you're in doubt I mean just call
them sister or I mean there's no rule
against a layperson bowing to another
layperson you know even if they are
technically still just unordained women
yeah you can treat them as though
they're nuns if you want and you call
them anything except be Cooney
because if you're calling them bikuni
and they're not bikunis or you don't

even think that it'll be coonies I mean
if you don't even think that they're
becomes that might be a kind of lying
so yeah

just called them by their name venerable
so and so called them sister something
like that

that's maybe what I would do

I'm not sure I'd bow to them maybe I
would it would depend

so anyway I'll just move on to Trump

asada's next question

which gets into the Dharma guptica thing
additionally women's ordination question
sorry is kind of complicated and has
multiple parts

why don't the taravada

bikuni advocacy group simply ordain in

another winnia for example Dharma

guptica as they had been and simply

practiced teravada instead of a Mahayana

tradition

is it because they want to recite the

same padimoka with the bikus and that is

how they Define equality according to

the domagupta kavinia they are fully

ordained but insist on forcing the Terra

vadawania to be restored is it simply

their push and insistence for equality

to ordain as taravana bikunis to

practice alongside terravala bikus

instead of Simply accepting a living

winnia tradition the Tibetans with the

Mula sarvasti Vada are just now fully ordaining bikunis because it was never introduced before with which makes more sense than trying to revive something whose lineage had been cut off however it appears that these nuns are being ordained under the Dharma guptica still no word on how they will actually jump that divide to ordain them as females of India which does not currently exist well again I mean first and foremost I think there should be some open-minded Scholars of monastic discipline you know preferably ordained to look into the actual ordination procedure of these not not just oh it's done according to

Dharma Gupta they got to check this and make sure that it's done in a way that would be considered valid according to Paulie because if it's not valid according to poly then who cares I mean they can't just pass themselves off as taravada nuns I mean they'd still be nanasam wasika which would be um the poly word for living under a different communion I mean there are different sect of Buddhism I mean if they're ordained into the Dharma guptika Sangha they would be Dharma guptika monks or nuns and then they would be nanasam wasika which means they wouldn't be Terra Vaden they'd be members of a different sect Buddhism

um so they're trying to use that the
Dharma Gupta coordination as like a foot
in the door to get them into the
theravada Sangha and
she's

here is asking

how do they how do they Define equality
is I mean it's it's like a warped
ridiculous kind of equality to me that
first of all there I mean I've I've
ranted about this before where you've
got these women I mean the the bikuni
order went extinct and in order to
ordain new bikunis you have to have
already existed bikunis to ordain them
because uh a biku has to be ordained

once just by the biku Sangha by at least
five other monks he has to be ordained
in an ordination ceremony a nun
a bikuni fully ordained has to be
ordained twice once by monks and once by
nuns

and if there aren't any nuns then she
can't be fully ordained so there have
been attempts to revive the the nuns so
they can ordain more nuns and some
attempts like ajan Brahm notoriously did
is just taking upon himself the
authority of godama Buddha and just
doing it by Fiat
and why just one one ordination and
calling it good enough
um

but the Dharma guptica yeah I mean you'd have to have some kind of poly scholar like anjan tanisro although he'd be rejected by the left because he's he's conservative in his his Buddhism anyway yeah so that would be for me that would be fundamental it's just an investigation into this Korean or Taiwanese ordination of nuns just to see if the way they are going about it would really be valid according with polyvinia and if it's not then they're lay people regardless of how they dress or act but it's just ridiculous I'm getting back to the rant

that they're wanting equality with men I mean that's that's supposedly the main reason for these bikinis wanting to be fully ordained bikinis they want the status of being called a bikuni now again as I've said many times before they can come up with any rules they want you know they can wear any kind of outfit they want they can live in accordance with any system they want within reason I suppose

so I mean all they want is just this official status of being a bikini that's that's what the equality amounts to and they wouldn't be equal even so because I mean in order for them to be really equal they would have to reject these

rules of monastic discipline that
that they're trying to take upon
themselves by becoming nuns it's like I
already pointed out that a biku a male a
monk

only needs to be ordained once a bikini
has to be ordained twice and one of
those times is by monks so they're
dependent upon monks for their
ordination which is not equal
the monks have four paragica rules if
you break any of these four rules you
are excommunicated for life
instantaneously even if nobody finds out
about it with nuns there's eight of them
you can't change paragica rules they're

never going to be really equal to monks
so I mean the the striving for equality
is striving for just perverting
the the rules of monastic discipline or
just ignoring them
and that's I mean you might as well just
be lay sisters you know like the the
nuns you see at the grocery store I've
been told that they aren't really nuns
they're they're like lay sisters who
aren't fully ordained nuns they're like
franciscans of the
I I don't even know what they're what it
is but they're they're not fully
ordained nuns
so
yeah I mean I've I've come up with this

I've mentioned this before that probably the ideal situation would be just to come up with a quasi-song I'm not even claiming to be fully ordained in any terravan Sangha but nevertheless maybe affiliated with the terabad and Sangha associated with it you know with their stamp of approval in which it's modified to be more suitable for the West they wouldn't have to wear the the toga thing for example

and you know you can they could just set up whatever rules they think are appropriate men and women could be equal in in the new Sangha but instead they want to revive this

this song of nuns that are clearly
considered inferior to monks and then
they're just going to start ignoring the
rules so that they're not inferior to
monks because they want equality
but really I mean it's like a political
thing it's it's not so much spiritual as
political they want the official status
of being fully ordained nuns and
again the first step in even verifying
that that's even possible would be to
have linear Scholars examine the exact
procedure in which these Mahayana nuns
supposedly validly ordained in the
Dharma Gupta tradition in the Dharma
Gupta because for those of you who don't
know I should have mentioned this

earlier is one of the pre-mahayana sects of Buddhism that existed in ancient India

so taravana was just one of these many schools Mula sarvasivada was mentioned in the question is is like a reform movement of sarvo divada which split away from taravada during in the third Council like a hundred years or no 200 years 150 200 years after the time of the Buddha

um so there were there were lots of sects of Buddhism in addition to taravada in Ancient India before Mahayana arose and uh this Dharma Gupta cassette

um is one of them
and apparently there are Mahayana
Buddhists in East Asia who are still
um at least giving lip service to Dharma
guptica rules of monastic discipline
um but whether they're really strictly
following it well enough and if it
resembles perovadan procedure well
enough for a teravada Buddhists who are
winning as Scholars who take it
seriously to consider it to be a valid
ordination procedure of valid lineage
I mean that has to be investigated that
would be like the first step and if if
the the left you know leftist Western
Buddhists are opposed to that then
that's not a good sign

you know if they're opposed to verifying
the validity of what they're insisting
upon then that probably indicates that
they're not so sure of themselves
so I'll just move on to Trump Assad's
next question here
finally a simple one
also do you have plans to do a book
group doesn't have to be a specific book
can be something about the GAE
making my way through ride the tiger
would be great to read with others I
don't even know what GAE means what is
g-a-e maybe I should have like follow up
this question with a question of my own
but with regard to starting a book group

um I haven't really given it much
thought to tell you the truth I read
very little nowadays although if I
started a book group or if we just I
just helped to get a book group going on
the Discord server maybe uh maybe I
might like spur me on to read more
because really I've reading has just
Fallen by the wayside I don't read very
much it's like I used to read before
going to bed but now I go to bed with
another person and we just start
snuggling and cuddling and you know
murmuring to each other and the reading
just doesn't happen
so I'm gonna have to develop new habits
if I'm going to take up Reading

seriously again because it is a good thing I'm I've read a lot in my life and it's just since I dropped out of the monk hood that I've just my reading is just nose dived into almost nothing okay so with regard to do I have plans to do a book group um maybe since reading this question they're sort of like very tentative wispy sort of semi plans but that's about as far as it's got and I don't know what the GAE is so we'll just move on to Trump assadva's next question do you think faithful Buddhists in the west would ever have to apply for asylum

in a Buddhist country due to the
increasing likelihood of State
intervention in the Affairs of private
life for instance forcing the ordination
of women where the monks refuse or
punishing Buddhists who refuse to
endorse abortion as supported by
Buddhist teaching I see that Canada is
now pushing for a stronger legislation
to punish those who resist the
celebration of sexual degeneracy and
this is an interesting question I never
really I never really contemplated this
before

um

do I think faithful Buddhists in the
west would ever have to apply for asylum

in a Buddhist country due to the
increasing likelihood of State
intervention well I don't think you'd
have to apply for Asylum I think
probably you could just move maybe in
some place like Burma they might
actually for like International
propaganda purposes you know except
um you know devout Buddhist refugees
that are westerners and you know have
something to offer to the country
um
but uh
yeah it's it's right now it's not so
much government intervention it's just
like

Western Buddhism has pretty much especially lay Buddhism has been pretty much been taken over by leftists and I've I've discussed this you know on numerous occasions where um you know conservatives in the west are more likely to be Christian you know it's the non-conservatives the progressives or liberals who are going to adopt non-american non-traditional systems and because they're not really into tradition they don't give a [_] even about Buddhist tradition if they convert to Buddhism because they just don't swing that way apparently and so they're just sort of essentially corrupting

Buddhism into mindfulness of white privilege and you know charging white people more to attend Retreats and just completely disregarding the fact that most practicing Buddhists in the west are indeed people of color because they are Asian immigrants and they just are almost completely ignored by these Western Progressive Buddhists who want more people of color and think that you know there's just too many white Buddhists in the west when of course white Buddhists are probably the minority at least of seriously practicing you know theravada Buddhists I don't know about other sects I can't

really say

maybe like Zen Buddhists in America I

don't think there's enough Japanese

immigrants

to uh to form a majority of Zen

Buddhists in America but there are lots

of Thai and sinhalis and and uh Burmese

immigrants in America plenty and

Cambodian too

in some Vietnamese also

that probably of the the ones they're

like taking the three refuges and taking

following five precepts and so forth

they are probably the majority I would

guess

certainly the majority of the ordained

Sangha in the west most ordained

theravada Buddhist monks in America or
were born in Asia and they're here as
missionaries or more likely just to run
cultural centers for the immigrants you
know do you know the the ethnic
ceremonies and rituals and and speak the
language and so forth and so that they
they feel at home the the immigrants do
and I'm saying that just based on
personal experience one I saw as a monk
in the West

so let's see here

I asked the question again since I've
been Meandering here do you think
faithful Buddhists in the west would
ever have to apply for asylum in a

Buddhist country if things go really
orwellian in the west yeah it's possible
I mean they might have to like sneak out
of the country you know in a disguised
as somebody else or you know hiding
underneath bales of cotton or something
I don't know

yeah but it is true this forcing
ordination of women where the monks
refuse I mean it's like all this bikuni
stuff it's just a non-issue in Burma I
think for the most part it's a non-issue
in Thailand also where the the Sangha is
these old monks who are very
conservative and traditional and they
just flat out say no and then the the
arrogant

leftist American or Western Buddhists
they don't care what the Sangha says
they're going to do it anyway even
though what they're talking about is
like Sangha matters but they don't care
so yeah like refuse to endorse abortion
well I mean you could probably get
banned from YouTube or something might
get might get arrested for hate speech
because after all hate speech is nothing
more than speech that leftists hate
so

yeah I mean it is possible if things get
more orwellian but let's just not
plan on that happening I mean you might
have like a uh what do you call it

there's this there's there's this word
of like a plan B you know but uh I can't
think of what it is so I'll just I'll go
to Trump assata's next question here
another question what are some
non-bootest texts which are closer to
the heart of ideas found in original or
archaic Buddhism versus the cosmological
zaniness of Mahayana or vajrayana
attacks I'm thinking of Ecclesiastes or
the daote Ching any others you could
recommend from the West well I wouldn't
say Ecclesiastes is very darnic
Ecclesiastes is I mean I like it and I
mean there are some
semi-quasite dharmic statements made
there but I mean Ecclesiastes is

practically just like the worldly
materialism you know it's almost
atheistic

so I mean with regard to

coming close to Old Buddhism

versus the cosmological zaniness of

Mahayana or vajrayana there are Mahayana

attacks and vajrayana attacks that

aren't zany that come fairly close to

what the original Buddhism was teaching

although they might come from a more

Chinese direction or a more Tibetan

Direction but like the Tibetan book of

the great Liberation I mean that comes

fairly close to the antakawaga or the

Sin Sin Ming supposedly by the third

Chinese patriarch of Zen

um I mean that comes fairly close to the
atticawaga

so yeah I can't really think offhand of
non-buddhist texts that come close to
Buddhism other than maybe like

uh uh the generally Epistle of James in
the New Testament is about the most
buddhistic statement in the New

Testament or for that matter like the
teachings of Saint John of the cross

but then you're getting like Christian
zaniness now

you're getting a Christianity throwing
but he doesn't really talk about Jesus
very much he's just talking about you
know how to mortify the will

and you know so that you become God through participation and so forth he talked about you know three stages of advancement you know there's the beginner which is like the putugina in Buddhism there's the Adept which would be like the the seika in in Buddhism and then you've got the perfected which is the aseka the enlightened being and it's it's strange because Saint John the cross he's talking about the stage of perfection when you'd think that in in in Christianity you know it's saying that nobody is perfect everyone's a sinner you know that you only get into heaven through the grace of God and here

he's talking about becoming God through participation

so and it's it's very similar to Buddhism a lot of ways I think Saint John of the Cross would have made a great Buddhist or uh Meister Eckhart also

is I mean if you want to get into something resembling the original or archaic Buddhism that isn't Buddhist at all maybe some of the more mystical teachings of I mean the deeper mystical teachings of any system really that probably

um you know there have been Sufi Muslims who were you know teaching stuff similar because I mean

all these religious systems they they
may be very different in the basic
fundamentals that the normies the lay
people follow but as you get higher and
higher they tend to converge unless they
just don't get high enough I mean some
systems just don't get high enough the
Jehovah's Witnesses they don't get
anywhere near to the top
but yeah I mean the higher up you go the
more they converge into a kind of
apathetic mysticism essentially and the
Sun is is starting to uh come down so
it's shining on my face and I hope it's
not going to completely glare up the
screen so I can't read the questions

let's see

so yeah I mean

sometimes I'm trying to think of like

like some kind of literature you know

like Dostoevsky he was he was I mean

there's a little bit of Dharma and

Dostoevsky like Crime and Punishment

where the punishment isn't so much

imposed upon him by the the authorities

the the punishments coming from his own

mind in his own Spirit kind of a thing

but yeah I mean I would still I mean if

you want to understand some of the

really deep aspects of Buddhism you can

find it in certain way on attacks like

even something like the heart Sutra

or The Diamond Cutter Sutra I mean

there's not a whole lot of Zenius in
that so it's sort of like when you read
terravada Buddhist texts like the
polytext you may have to do a little
searching to find the the deeper ones
that really resonate with you and it's
the same with Mahayana they're still
there

but you might have to do a little
treasure hunting

so the next and last question from Trump
is satva is what is the place and origin
of the anagarica in Burma and Southeast
Asia are they a common phenomenon

um

it's my understanding that with regard

to Sri Lanka it was anagarka Dharma Pala
pretty much just invented it where it's
you're sort of a renuncian but you're
not ordained

and they have these in Burma and
Thailand also they wear white robes and
in uh in Burma they're called uh postudo
and I can't remember what they're called
in in Thailand but posito is they just
wear white they can still handle money
they keep I think it's eight precepts
and it's mostly little kids that are too
young to be ordained as even novices I
was opposed to I was like possibly the
world's largest postdo at one time when
I was an attendant at this monastery
near Santa Cruz in California before I

was ordained I was uh posted though for like two months where I was just like cooking for the monks and driving them around and that kind of a thing but uh yeah this one the big school monastery near Mandalay that I lived at for a little over a year uh Maha gandayon they had posidos there they were all little kids you know they're like five six years old and they handled the money for the monks and uh

it's I don't know

I don't know what the ultimate origin is of this but their place is essentially as Monastery attendance there are

um yes in Burma also and yet is like the
Burmese pronunciation of the word Rishi
where they're Buddhists and they were
monks robes but they're
they're not ordained and they they
usually mix in a lot of other esoteric
you know like sorcery stuff or maybe
they just don't like following rules
that's one thing I used to get along
with it's a phenomenon in Burma called
the koyan G which is a salmon era that
is an adult usually once you're old
enough to be ordained which is 20 years
from conception you ordain is a monk but
some some men in Burma are maybe
conscientious enough or honest enough
about their lack of conscientiously

conscientiousness that they don't want to be fully ordained and so they just are novices their entire life and they tend to be humble and they don't meet with a lot of nearly as much respect as a fully ordained Seattle and I I could get along with them easier than I could with like the really just Shameless sloppy monks who let's face it all right there's lots of them in Asia so I'll just move on to the next question here and uh part of the the answer to that question like the origin of the anagaraka uh I don't know what the origin is so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from hey it's Tig

and hey it's TIG says please talk about
your feral teenager days

yeah I've in my life story that I've
shared a few times to some degree yeah I
went through a feral teenager stage and
um I used to say that my my first year
as a feral teenager like when I was 16
years old I probably learned more than I
learned in all the years leading up to
that

um but the way it worked was

I mean

most kids think that adults have life
figured out and the reason why the kid
himself doesn't have life figured out is
because he's not an adult yet and I kind

of went with that theory until when I was about 13 or so I was like outgrowing my mother just with regard to like psychologically and I was starting to become rather skeptical of this idea that adults really have things figured out by the time I was 16 it was just painfully obvious that the adults were as clueless as I was if not more so and so I just rebelled and uh right around it was my 16th birthday it was the first time I ever got high or got drunk and it just opened up this this whole new like false Paradise of just partying and having a good time

and

I just went with this theory that I mean
if you want to be happy you shouldn't do
anything you don't want to do like you
know go to school every day
you know stay sober that kind of thing
so yeah I have a certain Nostalgia for
those days of just being this wild
teenager you know I'd be gone pretty
much every weekend just living on a diet
of beer and corn chips
and I had this one this memory
of this guy Freddy it was a friend of
mine and we we've got a quarter and and
taped a thread to it and we went down to
this donut shop where a friend of his
was working and we we taped a thread to

this quarter and just dipped it into this Pac-Man machine until we had 99 games and then we were trading free games of Pac-Man for for free donuts and we just we skipped school that day and just spent all day just playing Pac-Man and eating Donuts and it was it was just a nice time you know it's kind of exciting is when you're 16 you're 17 years old just every day is like this exciting Adventure anyway and so I was trying to live life to the fullest and uh it was finally around when I was 17. you know I started realizing that just partying all the time you get into a lot of trouble it's it's a roller

coaster ride I mean they're they're ups
and then necessary like Corrections in a
downward Direction and if my father was
getting really pissed off at me after
I'd been kicked out of my mother's house
and uh yeah it was

yeah

so I eventually learned you know if
you're I still partied like when I was
in college but

um I I still learned that I you have to
do your homework first before you start
partying and it was like in in 10th
Grade when I was 15 before I had this
conversion

into party animal feral teenager mode
um I think my cumulative grade point

average for the whole year was like 3.93
it was all it was like 22 A's and two
B's or something
and I don't remember what my grades were
for 11th grade after the transition but
I do remember my very last report card
my final grades for second semester were
a 0.80
I think it was a 0.803 F's and two C's
and then my very next report card first
quarter of 12th grade was a four point
so the teachers really didn't know what
to do about me they knew I was
intelligent and they just didn't know
what to do so they just kind of gave me
space I think foreign

and we've been going at this for over an hour and a half this might be cut into two parts

so his TIG says now especially because like the the light might just really take over here

hey it's TIG says how do you envision the remainder of your life playing out how do you envision your next life playing out well

I assume that the remainder of this life playing out is I'll just kind of continue probably living here with my sweetheart and uh gradually uh get having less and less energy I suppose um forget more words Maybe uh

but I mean yeah

who knows what's going to happen see I

I'm really not into envisioning the

future because

I mean even really good science fiction

authors usually mess it up or even

profits biblical prophets or any kind of

prophets they usually mess things up too

and who am I compared to the science

fiction author or a Biblical prophet

so I mean

yeah I'm going to get older

I'm I hope that I'll be spending the

rest of my life with my sweetheart

and uh you know work for a living until

I don't have to anymore I just can't

anymore for probably health reasons or
something I don't know

yeah it's I'm not really good at that
sort of thing and how do I Vision my
next life playing out I mean that's
that's you're getting into science

fiction there who knows who knows what
the next life is going to be like if
there is one

so yeah I'm sorry to disappoint hey it's
TIG on that on that score

next question is from thur

how do you answer the framing of

Siddhartha as a bad guy for abandoning
his wife and child

well I mean just for starters his wife
and child according to the tradition

that says he abandoned them I mean she was a princess and his son was the son of a prince and presumably a prince himself they were living in a palace so I don't think they endured much hardship other than just you know emotional hardship of of their you know the man leaving them but they left he left for presumably a noble cause especially according to ancient Indian culture but let's say that his wife um wasn't rich in living in a palace you know the daughter-in-law of a royal king and all that um still Buddhist ethics you know like

early Buddhist athletes would consider
the renunciation of the world to be an a
noble act a worthy act because you're
trying to become enlightened and and
then help others become enlightened and
so

um yeah they do not consider it to be
immoral especially because karma is a
matter of mental States and if the
Buddha's mental States or the
bodhisatta's mental states were purely
Noble which presumably they were I mean
according to tradition the same
tradition that says that he did this
stuff
then
um

I mean he didn't do anything wrong
because he didn't have any unwholesome
mental States
it may be that he you know had some
feelings for his wife and his his
newborn son and you know on the night of
his Enlightenment or previous to the
night of his Enlightenment you know he
was doing some internal wrangling you
know it's like wrestling with his his
feelings and everything I mean that
would be human anyway
but yeah I mean there are stories of
just ordinary monks who abandoned their
wife and child and you know they're seen
as the good guys because I mean ancient

India did not go with a modern Western
utilitarian ethic you know it's
Buddhist ethics at least early Indian
Buddhist ethics or I mean it was
subjective it was personal is
like you know if you don't do anything
you're not supporting somebody I mean
that in and of itself I mean you're not
doing anything so you're not doing
anything wrong
but I mean you may have bad motives for
that and then you're going to get dinged
for the motives but
so yeah
uh by modern Western standards modern
Western ethics yeah somebody especially
somebody who's biased against the

historical go to My Buddha and say yeah
yeah he was a deadbeat who abandoned his
family but

his family was living in a palace

so we'll just move on to the next

question from akala or achala

and achella says is it acusala or

unwholesome to destroy the Buddhist

statue like the one in bamian destroyed

by the talibanis one can say it's just a

piece of clay which is subject to Decay

though does this justify the act of

destroying the Buddhist statue well

again and again I'm with regard to

questions like like this where someone

is asking you know is such and such an

action

Good Karma or Bad Karma it's such an action good or bad again it depends on the mental States for example let's say you've got a Buddha statue that's that's really damaged you know you find this old wooden Buddha statue in its own it's all messed up so I mean you could cremate it that's considered to be the respectful way of getting rid of of um not just Buddha statues but even Dharma books I'd say you've got uh a book of sutos like a copy of bikubody's majum and akaya and it gets all water damaged and you get a new one to replace it this one's wrecked I mean you don't just fling it into the garbage can that

would be considered bad etiquette at the very least you you would like respectfully burn it you pre-made it not in a garbage fire but you know a wood fire or something and you could destroy a Buddha statue that way if it's you know if for some reason you know it's just useless now you know it's it's like wrecked somehow you could burn it but I mean if if you just hate Buddhism you hate the Buddha and you're burning the statue where you're destroying the statue just out of you know

Buddhism sucks or something then you're going to be getting bad karma and just

thinking that without even doing it
you're gonna get Bad Karma just for just
for the hate not just hatred of the
Buddha I mean that I mean hating an
enlightened being or a saintly person I
mean you know that's that's another
level but we don't need to get into that
but

you know it's it's good to give
um saintly people the benefit of the
doubt like you know the Dalai Lama with
the tongue thing you know it's just give
them the benefit of the doubt I mean
don't jump to oh he's a pervert he's a
sexual predator kind of stuff because
I mean you can harm yourself by doing
that kind of thing

at least if Buddhism is true

so yeah it depends on the mental states of the person involved if they're doing it for uh you know if they're doing it respectfully because the statue is is no good anymore or for whatever reason then that's one thing but if they're doing it because you know it's like God is one God and Muhammad is this prophet and [__] Buddhism so then I mean that's something entirely different or just the [__] Buddhism just leaving aside all the Muslim stuff

so I'll just move on to achala's next question assuming that his name really this person's name really is achala

what are the karmic consequences of a
porn star

well that's kind of a difficult question
because different porn stars are
different and probably they have
different reasons for being porn stars
uh male and female porn stars would have
kind of a different kind of dynamic
going

um

I mean why are they a porn star they
need the money they're just heavily into
sex

I mean it it depends

um but I assume since they're having
lots of sex with strangers I mean
obviously they're they're not being

um you know they're not being restrained
with regard to sensuality you know
they're breaking the third precept big
time

um so there'd be some sort of sexual
Karma you know and uh I think like Frank
Zappa probably had a lot of sex Karma
and he wound up with prostate cancer or
you know they can just be messed up in
various ways I mean being a porn star
especially a female porn star I'm
certain has its dangers I mean you're
going to be dealing with predatory men
and just not respected and treated you
know just pretty much like a like a sex
object and a lot of them are get

involved in drugs and so forth it is a
it is kind of a dangerous life
spiritually very dangerous more so than
physically I think

and the the puppy is scratching
something behind me

she's been a bad puppy today I mean well
I mean she's a good puppy always but
she's been like peeing where she
shouldn't pee and chewing on things she
shouldn't chew on

but uh getting back to the porn star
issue

um yeah I'm sure I mean there must be
some porn stars that made it through
their career as a porn star and aren't
going to hell but then again this

reminds me that there is this weird suta
in Nepali text I don't remember where it
is exactly where the Buddha is actually
saying that all entertainers are gonna
go to hell

and um I mean I'm skeptical of that too
I would assume that would be apocrypha
because I mean

I don't think it's what they're doing is
bad enough I mean they're just sort of
like you know seducing people into
samsara you know just helping them to
stay enmeshed in samsara which pretty
much everybody does

you know I mean so long as you're
participating in some sorry culture you

know you're helping others to be stuck
in samsara in at least in an indirect
subtle way

but um yeah I mean they'd have some sort
of some sort of sexual correction most
likely sexual just in the opposite
direction like you know

prostate cancer or
whatever it is

so yeah I mean positive and negative
have to balance out so the positive that
they're experiencing is a porn star
um it either gets balanced out just
through their bad experiences you know
with you know predatory men or whatever
or it happens later on with possibly
partly just through like remorse or

regret or something or who knows it
depends on the person

so I'm just going to move on to the next
question this is from Fred

and Fred says

maybe you need some exchange with Mr
Wheeler question mark he claims to be
the world's best poly expert I don't
want to disparage him it's not my way
well

uh he's talking about Ken wheeler who uh
does like tattooed monkey podcasts I
think he used to have a YouTube channel
called angry photographer or something
and yeah I did a

uh I wrote a blog post this was maybe a

year ago in which uh I was discussing the whole idea that a lot of Western Buddhists just insist vehemently sometimes angrily that the Buddha taught an eternal soul and it's not just even like the Atman equals Brahman Eternal Soul of the upanishads of vedanta that's saying that everybody shares the Same Soul they want to even believe that each person has an individual ultimately real Eternal Soul and I have no idea where to get this other than I mean there's some certain Mahayana sutras that they use as authorities but although Ken wheeler isn't one of these but anyway I just I I can't even remember if I mentioned him directly

probably I did

um I mean I wasn't bashing him at the time I was disagreeing with the idea that the Buddha taught an individual Eternal Soul or an individual anything really

and I got somebody who who knew him uh send him the link I think and I got this really hostile arrogant sneering emails from him

he's talking about my my imbecilic babblings and so forth

um and he claims to be the world's best poly expert which is just a laugh anyone who really knows Paulie knows and who has read anything translated my 10

wheeler into from Paulie into English
knows that he just bungles it he just
botches it horribly

so

yeah I mean there has been some exchange
with with Ken wheeler and I mean I don't
wish anything bad to happen to the guy
although

um he has this conspiracy theory that uh
venerable Maha kasapa who was the senior
monk in the Sangha at the time of the
Buddhist passing into party Nirvana that
he actually murdered the Buddha or
conspired with with

um a blacksmith who a Wheeler just
distorts the Paulie to make it like the
son of the evil one Kamara he's got as

just Mara which is even spelled
different and everything but we don't
need we don't need to get into that
but I mean again it's you need to really
be careful if you're bashing a saint
just I mean get it's good to give them
the benefit of the doubt or just sort of
a saintly
spiritual person
um but yeah I mean with regard to that
there has been some exchange and I don't
think he's really open to debate or any
such thing he brags about you know
defeating people in debates but I've
never actually seen him debate anybody
so let's just move on to Fred's next

question

how can nibana be outside of the old
didn't the Lord say there was no other
all Beyond I will try to find The Suitor
yeah there's there is this Utah where
the Buddha is talking about the all he's
talking about you know all that exists
you know at least in some sorrow all the
all that exists and it's just you know
the eye and eye Consciousness and the
the visual stimulation and the year and
year Consciousness and the auditory
stimulation it's essentially just your
own senses and your sensory data is all
that really exists

um

or at least

um I mean if you want to consider the
visual datum and the auditory datum to
have some external existence then I'm I
suppose you could do that too in a
plausible way but really he's saying
that that the all is just subjective
experience
and

he says there is no all beyond that in
this suit and I don't remember I don't
recall the the location of this until
either

but um

the Buddha the Buddhism of the Buddhism
nibana is just completely off the scale
you know it's not part of the all

you know it's I mean it's it's just
totally off the scale you cannot deal
with it you can't incorporate like the
abhidharma scholars did and as I was saying
earlier they're trying to fit it into
this system of everything else and it
just doesn't work that way that
everything else is the all and and
nirvana is just unconditioned it's it's
just formless infinite and I mean it has
no boundaries in a way you can't say for
sure that it exists or doesn't exist I
mean existence and non-existence are a
kind of dichotomy that our samsaric so
that nirvana isn't even on the the like
it isn't participating in the dichotomy
of existence and non-existence

so I mean how is it going to be part of
this all of all that exists when it just
transcends the duality of exists and
doesn't exist

so I still stick by the idea that nibana
is Ultimate Reality and it's just not
part of the all because it's formless
and infinite and anything is formless
and infinite it's just paradoxical you
know it's like like Hegel starts his his
logic with you know absolute being an
absolute non-being being completely you
can't tell them apart at all they're
essentially synonymous
and that's
you know it's a paradox obviously

everything and nothing are the same
so yeah it's it's hard to explain this
stuff I mean how do you explain
something transcending both existence
and non-existence and while I'm at it it
also transcends both existing and not
existing and neither existing nor not
existing

so

I mean it's just this Paradox that
really doesn't fit the system and so it
just by definition almost it's not part
of the all because it's just not going
to fit

you can't fit it into anything

so we'll just move on to the next

question this is from David

and David says Ponyo Bossa what first
attracted you to a Buddhism and B
specially to the tarabada tradition
as a former Zen monk my attraction first
nurtured as a child was from the TV show
kung fu into the Chan Zen Mahayana
lineage Gasho

well what first attracted me to Buddhism
I assume was my father claimed to be a
Buddhist and I had a lot of respect from
my father I considered him when I was a
little kid especially to be a kind of
combination of Hercules and Socrates and
so when he was talking about he was a
Buddhist then at least it made me
open-minded to Buddhism although we did

have a big Buddha statue on top of our fireplace on the mantle above the fireplace when I was a kid and it scared me I didn't like being in the room alone with it just because the the living room was sort of not well lit it was sort of a darkish room and he's got this dark looming figure up there you know but uh

um

after my feral teenager phase I I was introduced to Western or to Eastern philosophy I should say mainly through uh a youth counselor who was giving me ROM Doss books to read he also gave me the book Illusions by Richard Bach which is really a good book

and um

so that got me interested in eastern
philosophy and uh eventually I think
what

what converted me to Buddhism was

reading the book Zen Flesh and Bones

um compiled by Paul reps

and uh that was when I was about 19 18

or 19 I guess and then what converted me

to tarovada in particular was reading

when I was also in college maybe a year

or two later an old translation of the

Sutton ipata which was in Max Mueller's

sacred sacred books of the East

so it was an old translation by it

uh a European fellow named thousbow from

like the 1890s

but

I really like this the the toughness and
this the radical renunciation of it

um I know it just for some reason just
resonated with me and it was very

ancient it goes way back to the Buddhist
time or the whole most of the Buddhist
time

so I was I was really interested in that
and I'm gradually seeing the the
sunshine like completely obscure my face
in this video

which I will point out to my sweetheart
who keeps insisting or at least
strenuously urging me to change up my
background and do videos outdoors

so

anyway I also was impressed by the TV
show kung fu and that was that was
definitely an influence although it
didn't really convert me or anything
so next question from

from David

I'm a little bit distracted here I want
to see okay

so next question from David do you
believe in rebirth and have you had past
life experiences

well I take rebirth as a kind of working
hypothesis I mean I don't think there's
any way you could empirically prove it
one way or the other you couldn't prove

that it does exist and you can't really
prove that it doesn't exist
so it's just a working hypothesis
because

Buddhism accepts it and a lot of people
who are much wiser than me I think like
neem curly Baba also endorsed it
and so yeah I accepted as a working
hypothesis you know I'm not just
vehemently insisting upon it
and uh have I had past life experiences
um I've had

and you can't really call it a past life
experience I don't really vividly recall
any past lives my father was convinced
that I am my own grandfather that I'm a
Reincarnation of his father

so I mean he was he used to tell me all these uh resemblances I had with my own grandfather although that could be genetic

um in in genetics class when I was taking biology in college they'd say that you actually resemble two of your grandparents more than you resemble your parents and I assume that on his side of the family I resembled his father more than I resembled his mother

but I do have these intuitions like

just like a really a resonance or a fascination with certain cultures in the past

or you know just there's like some kind of

now I guess I guess resonance or
resonation just

you know you just fascinated by it and
you can't really be explained by

genetics or past experience like 14th
century England I just feel like there's
a good chance that I lived in 14th

century England some sort of rascally
Catholic monk and I despise the French

of course the 100 Years War was going on
at that time

um I probably transcribed books for a
living because the printing press hadn't
been invented yet at least not in the
west

um a good chance I died of Bubonic
plague or and I probably consider that
to be a just punishment from God for me
being such a rascally monk I think I may
have met my sweetheart in that life also
because she has a similar feeling about
medieval England and we both have like
I've got like this weird little purple
spot right over my lymph node on my my
right groin which and I've always been
kind of squeamish about that part of my
body anyway and uh so I think that may
have been where the bubo was when I got
Bubonic plague also I think there's a
good chance that for example I was
Japanese like maybe in the 1700s

um

um there's I've got a lot of Japan karma
in this life I've been to Japan three
times without ever planning to go there
I used to work on Japanese ships

um yeah there's just certain things
about Japan that I really like

um there's a good chance that uh like in
prehistoric times I was some sort of
Shaman that worshiped snakes like in the
Indus Valley Civilization or like

Northwestern India that general area
there's a good chance just again these
are just intuitions

that uh I was living in around Naples
like during the late Roman Republic or
early Empire

uh wasn't killed by Vesuvius though
so so it's just like intuition just
these weird
um just chemical attractions to certain
periods in history in certain places
that I mean I can't really explain it in
any other way like certain cultures I
just have no Affinity with like ancient
Egypt I just have no interest in that uh
ancient Native American cultures in
North Central or South America just
you know it's I mean it's not like I
despise it or anything it just doesn't
call to me like certain other cultures
do
so anyway

I'll just move on to the next question
which is from O'Rourke

and Rourke says

what are the range of requirements for
different monasteries or whatever the
appropriate term is

who would train someone to become a monk
the range of requirements

wow I mean at the at the lower end I
mean there's hardly any requirements at
all I mean you don't even have to be a
Buddhist to be ordained at some

monasteries in Burma you can just walk
in I have this one monk American monk
friend of mine when I was living in

Burma who said that uh he was at this

Monastery where there was this monk who

was just like raving just like splashing
around in this Pond and it turned out
that he was an alcoholic he was going
through DTS and he thought that being
ordained as a monk was going to help him
stop being an alcoholic

and I mean he had just been ordained
very recently obviously within just a
matter of days and that happens quite a
lot so I mean at the lower end
some monasteries will just ordain
anybody

uh with regard to the higher end like
like in the ajan cha tradition you have
to be uh like a monastery attendant for
like two years before or I think it's

you have to be like a like an anagarica
for one year and then you can be a
novice for another year before they'll
fully ordain you as a monk and then
you've got to learn all the stuff that
monks have to learn personally I was
ordained in the Burmese Theravada
tradition one of the few relatively
ascetic Forest traditions in Burma and
uh before I was ordained I had to learn
some some Pali and learn about the rules
of monastic discipline and learn some
Sutta you know read read sutras and so
forth learn how to meditate that kind of
thing
and you're probably better off if you're
at a monastery that's just going to ordain

anybody it is it just takes all-comers
it's not going to be a very strict
monastery

so you'd be better off finding a place
where it's not so easy to get in like
agent child used to say easy to ordain
easy to disrupt

so

but again I would recommend anyone who
really wants to be ordained as a monk to
spend at least two years in in Asia in a
Buddhist culture before uh
jumping into the spiritual Siberia that
is the West

so the next question from Rorke
that's right yeah work

says also what are the range of Buddhist
conceptions of hell if all consciousness
what is the term for such in Buddhism
is subject to form and context and there
is no permanent soul

why do Buddhists seem to talk about hell
in the same way Christians do well it's
not exactly the same because hell
doesn't last forever in Buddhism neither
heaven doesn't last forever

um so it's

uh what what trans migrates what is
reborn into another existence isn't a
soul it's like the momentum of your
mental States it's your karma the stream
of karma is what

um determines where you're going to be

reborn

so

if you do certain very bad things like murder one of your own parents you're guaranteed of of hell and there's various levels of hell just like in in Buddhism especially taravada Buddhism you know there are many different Heaven Realms and also there are many different hell Realms and they just progressively get worse and worse till the very bottom the lowest pit of Hell is called Avicii hell and it's um you know their detailed descriptions of Avicii hell in in some of the sutos whereas it's just like blazing hot and

you've got demons that are torturing
um torturing the beings there with like
axes and and all kinds of terrible
things is you know they're just
describing uh a realm of existence as
icky as possible

so

um yeah so there are differences the
main difference is that hell doesn't
last forever after you have exhausted
your Bad Karma then you get reborn
somewhere else like for example the the
Buddhist rough equivalent to Judas
Iscaiot is dewadata who is the Buddhist
cousin I think also his brother-in-law
who tried to take over the the Sangha or
at least started a Schism in the Sangha

according to tradition he tried to
murder the Buddha more than once and
according to tradition the same
tradition

he uh is now in Avicii hell being
roasted and tortured by demons but he is
destined in the future you know millions
of years from now after he finally gets
out of hell to become a Pacheco Buddha
which is like a fully enlightened being
who is almost a Buddha but he is a
Hermit and he he arrived they arise in
times when there is no Buddhism in the
world and so he just is enlightened but
he just lives in a cave or something
somewhere and doesn't start Buddhism

again he doesn't start the wheel of
Dharma rolling

so the range of Buddhist conceptions of
Hell there's not much of a range because
it's described fairly

you know fairly clearly you know

precisely in the texts so there's not a
whole lot of range although there are
different hell Realms but there's not a
lot of discussion of the higher hell

Realms the ones that aren't so bad they
pretty much emphasize the worst one and

I mean how are you going to have you

know 18 different levels of hell you

know I don't know I mean Dante was able
to come up with different different

rings of hell in his one Inferno so it

could be something along those lines but
my impression is based on my faulty
memory is they all tend to be rather hot
so yeah

let's see and the term for uh

Consciousness in Buddhism usually is
winyana

although sometimes cheetah also can be
defined as Consciousness or also mono
Mana

which uh may have the same etymology as
the English word mental

because Paulie is an Indo-European
language and English also is a European
Indo-European language so they have like
the same ancestral language going back

into prehistoric times

so the next question is from Zane

and Zayn quotes me here saying when

you're dead you're not just dead your

Consciousness somehow continues after

the body dies

and then he points out you in a response

to a question from a q a number 44. and

then he he also quotes me saying you

just get a different body the body is

just like a vehicle

and that's from the same q a

and then he says okay my question is

what is the U that gets a different body

and what is the you that is not just

dead and how is it that you call these

are in quotes differ you are different

from an Atman also in quotes

particularly if that reincarnated you is
just Consciousness

I see teachings where the five skandas
are taken to not be the Atman but the
fifth skanda is identified as

Ganda because he's using the sanskriter

which I see Buddhists interpreting as

Consciousness aggregate or something

like that anyway it would be nice for me

at least if you could address this okay

well I've already kind of addressed it

but

um I mean rebirth all that is reborn is

your karma which is like the the

momentum of your mental States

and those are manifestations of
consciousness

because in winyanakanda in Nepali when
yanakanda the the the uh

the aggregate of consciousness

the Consciousness always has to be
consciousness of something it's not
formless consciousness

it's consciousness of something so it's
sort of like the s in my interpretation
this is an abhidham this isn't Orthodox
but the Orthodox really doesn't make a
lot of sense

um that Consciousness is like the the
essence of the mental state and the
actual mental state itself is the form
that it takes you know like glass can

assume different forms but it's all
glass you know you can have a glass pop
bottle a glass window whatever
and it's the same way with with
Consciousness I mean you can have
um uh Consciousness assuming the form of
anger or assuming the form of lust or
assuming the form of some intellectual
concept or whatever

so

um

the idea and is found in a few uh
fragments of old cuntas in in the poly
texts is that
Enlightenment would be formless infinite
Consciousness unmanifest you know

luminous all-round as it says in the
texts but the thing is once something
becomes formless it becomes an infinite
I mean it's

it's not a thing anymore

you know it's just off the scale it's I
mean it it transcends existence and
non-existence because both infinity and
zero are kind of formless

they're a kind of infinity

so

I'm trying to get to this question here
question is that you think it's a
different body yeah what is the you
that's that's essentially just the the
uh

the momentum of your your mental state

or your karma that is being reborn we're
using the body as a kind of vehicle
and uh and then with the second part of
the question yeah the Consciousness
aggregate

yeah I've already discussed that so I'll
just uh continue here

and uh yeah this is turning into long I
think this one might be in two parts
because we're already over two hours and
uh I'm more than halfway done though so
there is that

next question

is from Creole creel

k-r-i-e-l creel let's call him Creole

let's call him him let's just assume his

pronoun

what do you and teravada in general make out of near-death experiences these seem to be profound and life-changing spiritual experiences not necessarily in accordance with Buddhism many times they report the idea of a Soul Plan Soul contracts and the idea that we chose to Incarnate for the purpose of spiritual Evolution if their perspective is partial even though profound would that mean that they generally report such Rosy and positive perspective of incarnation and life due to their karma and attachment to samsara thank you a lot for your answer if any I personally spoke with a few of them and was briefly

a friend of of one so that's so that
topic is dear to me

okay this is an interesting question

I've read about a lot of near-death

experiences including a few that

essentially cause like the enlightenment
of the person who experienced it like uh

oh John

I've mentioned it more than once he got
poisoned in Thailand almost died

John

it's like a hyphenated name and now I
can't remember it because I'm getting

old I guess plus I've had full super

malaria baking my brain like seven times

plus of course my feral teenager

partying phase

so let's go to near-death experiences

yeah they do seem to follow a certain

pattern and that is uh like you're

getting a motorcycle wreck

for example God forbid you almost drown

something like that or you're you're on

a

um like an operating table

and all of a sudden you start feeling as

though you're levitating above your own

body and you can look down you can see

your body sprawled out on the operating

table or on the pavement or whatever or

floating in the water and then you go up

and up and there's like the hieronymous

Bosch painting this famous painting by

Bosch about uh like the Imperium I can't remember the full title entering the Imperium or something where you're floating up and there's this tunnel with this bright light at the end and there's like an angel waiting at the at the other end of this this tunnel going up towards the bright light and you go up there and you meet some guide maybe an angel maybe Jesus maybe some important religious figure from a different religion that you happen to follow could be uh like a deceased relative or dear friend and they'll they'll give you some instructions you know they might show

you around a little bit and then
generally they have you review your
experience in life like your life
flashing before your eyes except uh like
with a guide to help you through it and
then in a lot of cases they say well you
can choose to stay or or go back or they
might say you just have to go back the
ones that get to stay they don't come
back to tell us about it and um
so it's it's like this common experience
and I assume there's some kind of truth
to it and what strikes me is that
although it's completely unorthodox from
a terrible about a Buddhist point of
view there's no mention of it at least
um what is described is reminiscent of

some of the stuff that you read in the Tibetan Book of the Dead like in the Tibetan Book of the Dead after you die you find yourself in a bright light and they advise you to stay in that light as long as you can stand it because it has a purifying effect but most people eventually panic and leave the light because they feel like they're dissolving and dying and then after that there's like a less bright light this sort of a golden light instead of bright white and you you should stay in that one too and then you you might meet with Buddhas or or bodhisattvas and so forth and in the

Tibetan Book of the Dead it's it's it's reminding you again and again you know it's all a production of your mind you know it's all generated by your own your own mind like your own Karma your own imagination or whatever and then eventually you're going to uh find yourself in this place where there's all kinds of beings having sex around you and if you are attracted to one group one couple having sex you just get drawn into it and then you're reborn as their child as as the female gets impregnated um so there is some similarity between that and the Tibetan Book of the Dead and I think a lot of the variations you know like the Soul Plan and the angel or

Jesus or the bodhisattvas or whatever is just your own expectations because it is generated by your own mind to some degree at least to some degree if not totally

and again a lot of people they have these near-death experiences and it has a life-changing effect on them for starters they're just not afraid of death anymore

and uh like I said I I still can't remember John

I want to say come out Zen but that's that's not the guy but he was he was uh like a scientist an atheist who all of a sudden had this near-death experience

and it was like a an Eckhart Tolle style
Awakening and um
or there's a really good movie that was
actually recommended by the same guy
that's why I watched it called Fearless
in which this guy has a near-death
experience and it changes his life but
it makes him not only Fearless it makes
him like brutally honest and so forth
and he he encounters so much friction
with everyone around him after going
back into the world that eventually they
just start pressuring him into becoming
unenlightened again
but I think I may have completely
digressed on that one
but with regard to near-death

experiences uh I think that even what we're experiencing right here is mind generated I'm no materialist I'm certainly not a scientific realist and so

um yeah I can accept that it's something maybe archetypal you know it's just kind of built into the subconscious mind that you would have experiences like that somehow and um I mean the effects tend to be beneficial I've never read someone who was just totally freaked out I mean it may be that there are some people that they they see hell you know they think they're they see that they're heading for hell if they if they stay

dead and then they come back to try and rectify their life I'm sure that sort of thing has happened a few times but the ones I've read are generally more positive like the questioner here Creel has been talking about where

um

you know you see that I mean it's not that big of a deal that you're that you're dead that you know your your spirit

hasn't died

but um yeah I've read quite a few weird stories but I won't I won't uh linger with regard to those because I have more questions to answer here so the next question from Creel

is I have another question a silly one
perhaps what does Buddhism believe in
regard to plant life do plants have a
soul or any form of Consciousness or
cheetah because it seems obvious to me
that they express some form of sentient
presence and if so do they suffer like
any other deluded being and can we
reincarnate as a plant and if they
suffer do they suffer while being eaten
or killed if they have no soul or
cheetah

that would be kind of weird because they
would be some form of natural artificial
intelligence strange oxymoron thanks
well in the in the suitors there's not

much mention of the consciousness of plants but it does say that plants are Jiva which means one faculty life so like a human being has six sense faculties you know you've got the the eyes the ears the nose the tongue just the body in general and uh also we've got mind so that would be the the six faculties unless I I forgot one I skipped one maybe

but uh a plant has only one and that is the sense of touch so you do have some sensitive plants maybe this is based on um you know sort of folklore and the knowledge of plants that will like the leaves will close up when you touch them

that kind of a thing

um Buddhism otherwise really doesn't

talk about being reincarnated as plants

that I'm aware of I'm not sure about

even the Hindus talking about that

although maybe some do but the Jane's

definitely believed that not only were

plants alive but even like fire was

conscious had like a very primordial

primitive kind of Consciousness possibly

even like crystals you know they've got

this this structure to them that

it just implies some sort of very

primitive rudimentary kind of

consciousness

so the genes would have most to say

about Consciousness in plants from a
spiritual point of view I think
um but Buddhism I do not recall
any talk about like rebirth from plants
or two plants
and it's it's kind of amazing how this
little puppy can make this table shake
so much just by trotting by
let's see
so do they suffer while being eaten or
killed well for one thing they don't
have a nervous system and although I'm
not a scientifically realist I do have a
degree in biology and they just don't
have nerves so I mean they wouldn't
experience
you know they wouldn't experience things

anywhere close to the way we do because
we've got a relatively well developed
nervous system

um but I do think that I mean the entire
universe is a manifestation of

Consciousness that even uh this uh

white peach can that is now empty it's

it contains just very Elemental very

simple form of Consciousness like in

physics they say matter is like frozen

energy that ultimately matter is energy

equals mc^2 and all that and I

would say that energy is just a very

very primitive form of what US

psychologists will call Consciousness

just as Consciousness is a very

developed complicated form of what a physicist would call Energy it already goes one way you just have to make it go the other way too and uh oh I would be correct in that assumption

but uh yeah with regard to plants

Buddhism really doesn't talk about it much Buddhism is really is it's like an anthropocentric system most religions are and uh it was

particularly The Janes that would see even fire as a kind of primitive life that's why a Jane monk isn't allowed to start a fire or put out a fire because he's [__] with Karma by doing that by creating life or killing life and the same goes for plants although

um the reason why monks Buddhist monks are not allowed to kill plants it's a pachidia offense even to to damage a green plant so a Buddhist monk is not supposed to mow Lawns not supposed to trim hedges anything like that because even if you're not killing the plant you're cutting off green leaves or shoots or anything alive then you are harming ikendra Jiva or one faculty life so Buddhism does acknowledge that plants do have a kind of Consciousness because they have a sense of touch but uh also it was just uh Indian culture that would cause the rule that monks aren't allowed to damage plants

because if they damage plants then you'd have non-budists like making fun of them and criticizing them and you know

Finding fault with them because that's what people do if you're biased against somebody they can do no right you know if if you don't like the Dalai Lama you consider him to be a pervert and a sexual predator now

just because you didn't like him to begin with

that sort of thing although whether he is a pervert or not I can't say I kind of doubt it I'm willing to give him the benefit of the doubt

so let's just move on to oh wait here's another one I almost I almost skipped

over this one this next question is from
Mr unofficial

who I almost skipped over but did not
and Mr unofficial says wasting my days
at my Wagey job knowing I do not have
true Freedom builds up a great deal of
anger and even hatred inside me these
are obviously unskillful mindsets and
they torment me however they help me in
some respect in some aspects of my life
anger gives me energy when working out
in my general discontentment gives me a
drive to find a better life for myself
how can I direct these feelings in a
more skillful and healthy way is there
such a thing as skillful anger

well there's really is not such a thing
as skillful Anger from a Buddhist point
of view but I mean there is a kind of
natural aggression

in human beings especially in human
males and traditionally the way of
dealing with that would be like like
High School athletics or just just
Athletics in general or I mean if you're
really into that you get into some sort
of aggressive kind of career like maybe
a soldier

that would be the traditional way of
dealing with masculine aggression that
comes up naturally

um but getting up to the top here
wasting my days at my Wagey job knowing

I do not have true Freedom

um well I mean I'm

I mean I wouldn't say I'm wasting my

days at my way G job but I do have a

wagy job and uh knowing I do not have

true Freedom well I mean that would

apply to everybody I think

you know even even somebody who doesn't

have to work for a living doesn't have

true freedom

not total freedom I mean Free Will and

if it exists at all it's a paradox

because it's logically impossible

so the anger and hatred I mean

you might try I'm just mindfully

observing the anger and hatred and just

observing it like a ichthyologist was
Observe a dead fish and not identify
with it it's just mental states that are
rising it's not really you
so but I mean if you do have natural
aggression just natural I mean it could
even be anger I mean you can work out
your anger in wholesome ways that would
be a skillful way of dealing with an
unskillful mental state let's say you've
got anger or hatred and even just you
know punching a pillow or something I
mean that would be a way of at least
getting rid of it in a in a harmless way
unless you really [_] up the pillow
but I mean the pillow although according
to my theory it does contain some

extremely Elemental Consciousness I
doubt that it's going to feel any pain
so yeah when working out he says anger
gives me energy when working out
and my general discontentment gives me a
drive to find a better life for myself
which reminds me that uh in the wisudi
Maga it talks about six different
um like personality types which is kind
of interesting that we see Maga talks
about six personality types you've got
greed hate and delusion and then you've
got the Opposites like one is Faith one
is intellect one is something else and
it's been a long time since I read that
we see the manga but

it does point out that people with a
dose of temperament where like anger and
and like hatred just these kind of kind
of irritable people they can actually
become enlightened more easily than most
other people because they have this
they're not satisfied with some sorrow
you know they are discontented with
samsara which can help them to to
practice more correctly even though
ultimately this anger or
um Dosa is one of the three poisons you
know it's one of the things that you
have to eventually transcend and puppies
dogs trotting back and forth are shaking
the hell out of the camera which is
weird I don't know how they do it the

puppy only weighs about eight pounds I
would guess and There She Goes Again
so let's see
yeah Mr unofficial yeah I think
um I mean there's no such thing as
skillful anger but there are relatively
skillful ways of
of working it off I mean it's not just
going to disappear so I mean you can at
least you know go out and shoot baskets
or you know work out or or jog or or
whatever instead of you know cursing at
the TV screen or you know taking it out
on someone close to you that kind of
thing that's that's really important I
mean if you're in a bad mood you know

you're in a bad mood you know it's it's
good to be very cautious when dealing
with others just so you're not taking it
out on them and then making more Bad
Karma that just perpetuates the problem
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Austin
and Austin says I understand how Karma
can be understood as a mental state that
guides volitional activity but how does
karma influence seemingly random
physical phenomena from outside our mind
be befalling us
well again it's it's like
let's let's just assume that there is
such a thing as an external Universe
like

let's just assume that this material stuff around me really exists in some way but nevertheless I would say that it's our own mind that is determining this it's like if you've got no mind there's nothing that is condensing the world down into this ten thousand things that the now teaching talks about um it's sort of like in in like quantum physics they're talking about how you got the uh the quantum field you know it's just like infinite potential you know anything can arise in this Quantum field it contains infinite energy and zero energy simultaneously and paradoxically

and

um it requires uh like a conscious

Observer to condense down the infinite

possibilities into just one you know you

gotta collapse the state vector

so our mind is collapsing the state

Vector in accordance with our own Karma

and there are an infinite number of

Worlds you know the many worlds

hypothesis and so we just happen to be

in the one where the same sorts of

things are happening to the people

around us too you know if if we're

experiencing an earthquake then the

people next door are experiencing one

too unless they sweep through it or

something

but even then they'll hear about it on
the radio the next day or whatever

so

foreign

yeah it's like it's like we're

essentially dreaming and that's why the

Buddha I mean Buddha literally means

awakened he has woken up from the dream

and even if you're like an enlightened

being

still walking through samsara it could

be compared to something like lucid

dreaming

and so I mean we're still dreaming our

our existence this I mean this world of

greenness and chirping birds and the

little Trump doll and everything I mean
it wouldn't exist without humans
manufacturing it Conjuring it up through
conceptions

so I think I'll just move on to the next
question

I'm I'm I'm being a little bit cryptic I
think I'm not fully answering questions
as fully as sometimes I do just because
there's so many questions this time and
I may have turned this into a weekly
show

so the next question is from Johannes
how close do you think Paulie is to the
Buddha's language well the Buddha spoke
a kind of Proto poly I'm pretty sure
that that uh Polly is based probably

on a language or dialect that was either
what the Buddha spoke or similar to what
the Buddha spoke terravonna Buddhism
arose

somewhat west of the Buddhism stomping
ground but I'm pretty sure that Paulie
and whatever language the Buddha
originally spoke like magadi

I think it's called muggedy the language
of mugada

that they would be mutually inner
understandable maybe somewhat like uh
Norwegian and Swedish or something like
Portuguese and and Spanish you know
they'd be mutually intelligible for the
most part there might be a few words

that you're not sure about

so

yeah I think that they're they're fairly

similar much more similar to what the

Buddhist language in Sanskrit for

example

so johannes's next question are there

any commentaries on the size of the

Buddha's tongue well you don't even need

commentaries you can read it directly in

the sutas like I think it's the

introduction to the parayana Wagga the

parayanawaga for the most part is very

old it's the last chapter of the sunji

nipata but you've got uh an intro and a

conclusion that are apparently much

later

you know I think I could be wrong but I think that um there's there's mention of the 32 marks about of the the great man the mahapurisa and it talks about how the Buddha can cover his entire face with his tongue or he can he can lick his own eyebrows and his tongue is so long and his tongue is so wide um I don't know how that would be possible how he'd fit into his mouth but at the very least it says that he can lick his own eyebrows I mean when it says he can cover his whole face it just might mean um you know not not all at the same time but he moves it around or could move it

around and cover any part of his face
with it but any sutra where it's talking
about the 32 marks of a great man
um especially if it's enumerating them
it's gonna it's gonna cover the the
tongue part

so you don't even need to go to the
commentaries for that it's right there
in the sutras

and personally I'm I mean the whole 32
marks of a great man obviously are not
entirely true because just going with
math or geometry it's not possible for
one person to have all 32 marks at the
same time it's just some kind of late
weirdness some kind of Indian tradition
thing that got thrown in as a part of

devotionalism that developed in Buddhism
after the Buddha's time

so the next question and this is the
last question by golly that caught me by
surprise we're at the last question
this is from Stevens

Stephen says here's a question for you
what's with the paper fans all the
Seattles have is it because it's so hot
and full of insects in Burma or does it
have some other special meaning well
most of the fans that you see Seattle is
holding you know like in any kind of
formal picture of Seattle's first of all
they'll have like the stop it
puppies being naughty again yeah here

see

so they'll have these

the like in a formal picture of the

Seattle the puppy distracted me they'll

have like their this big collar around

their neck and sometimes they'll beef up

the collar by stuffing newspaper into it

like a photographer will make the

special collar thing inserted into the

the cloth robe collar to make their

collar look very neat and straight and

everything and they'll be holding a fan

and it's usually not a paper fan it's

shaped like kind of like this

sort of like a lily pad or something

with a handle on it and sometimes it'll

have like some kind of print on it like

on one side it might have the name of
the monastery and on the other side
it'll be the the people who donated it
or something and there's usually it's
it's cloth over wire and there's a
little zipper on the back and you can
stuff things into the fan if you want to
like little pieces of paper or money or
something I don't know and um they're
originally derived I mean the originally
evolved from palm leaf fans which are
were shaped pretty much the same way
and uh

it's like pull my relief

is is what the old fans are made out of
and now it's usually cloth over a

wireframe although you can get paper
ones pretty easy like in Burma if
there's any kind of Festival like a
marriage reception a wedding reception
or

um

like somebody their their kids are going
to be ordained temporarily as a novice
you know he's going through the ritual
of manhood they'll they'll give out
paper fans I still have one I forgot to
bring it I you know I don't have it out
here on the deck but uh you can get
little paper fans too and it'll have to
be the print of you know who what what
the occasion is and who is who's
sponsoring it and all that kind of thing

but in like the 1800s and the very early 1900s like during British colonial times when a Seattle or a monk would give a public discourse he'd give the discourse behind the fan you wouldn't see his face he'd be like holding the fan up in front of his face while giving the discourse and

um originally or ostensibly ostensibly the the purpose of that is so he wouldn't be distracted by any attractive females in the audience he was being demure and and modest and restrained by by by concealing the view of the audience from him while he's giving the talk and nowadays they don't

do that anymore but it's just another
kind of more or less mindless tradition
um of Burmese Buddhism that it's just
what you do and there's lots of these
more or less meaningless formalities
that you do like if a monk is gonna sit
anywhere he sits on a sitting cloth and
I really didn't see the point of it
sometimes because let's say you're going
to be riding in a car
so you're going to just sit down on the
seat
and the lay people that are like being
your attendants are going to drive you
somewhere they start panicking it's like
where's your sitting cloth I'm like well
it's packed away somewhere it doesn't

matter I mean like my robes and the the
seed are both clean it doesn't matter
and we gotta find you a sitting cloth
and so they'll go out and find some
piece of cloth like a towel or something
for the monk to sit on when it's just
not necessary it's just this tradition
you know it's just what you're supposed
to do and having the fan especially on
formal occasions is just another one of
those and it they actually can be used
to Fan yourself I I've I've used them to
fan myself actually
because after all they are fans
but um the the reason why they carry
them around even if it's not hot is just

it's just a tradition it was originally
based on they would they would give
their sermons behind the fan and I don't
think that they had that in Thailand
or Sri Lanka and that's the end that
says the last question and we've gone
over two and a half hours with this and
maybe I should turn this into a
two-parter or something and uh the the
kamukamu extract is really kicking in
good now and uh

I'm done so as one of the questioners
said I always say at the end of these be
happy

hello and welcome to episode 46 of
question and answer and I must say I had
no idea I'd ever be doing 46 of these
but here I am doing 46 of these
and uh I must say that uh things have uh
changed a bit since the last episode
that I did out on the back porch
with the dogs and such
because just last Tuesday I asked my
sweetheart to marry me and she said yes
so now I'm officially
engaged
also I might be getting a different job
at a different sheet metal shop soon
which uh will pay more than five bucks
an hour more than the last place which

is nice especially considering that I'm
going to have a wife

um

within the next year or so

we haven't we haven't uh officially set
a date yet although I think it's going
to be next year because my sweetie is
superstitious about odd numbered years

bovine glandular secretions

huh

so I guess we might as well get to it
because there's lots of questions again
this time and I really I'm seriously
considering doing one of these once a
week

now because uh the number of questions
has increased somewhat the last number

45 my peach 45 Edition it was uh getting
up towards three hours

so

let's just get in on this let's just get
started here

so the first question is from aurelian

and he asked this question before I

published the last q a but

um I'd already recorded it so this one's

kind of an old one let's hope it hasn't

expired

and aurelian says how should Nava

kavadans take refuge for now it would be

based Buddhists on the internet

self-initiating unless they are able to

make contact with legit monks somehow do

you have thoughts about a more organized approach for accepting new members into the movement at some point Politically Incorrect poly names when

I mean it's always been like I've consider it to be a good idea my friend Otto kind of took the the name Nava kavada and ran with it and he's got a Nava kavada channel on bit shoot but uh I guess you take refuge the same way that any other Buddhists would take refuge if you got a legit monk asarelian says you can take refuge before the legit monk you know in his presence if not I mean just if you've got an altar you know you can just you know squat down in front of the altar bow down and

and take the take the Refuge there the
three refuges

and Sangha would be the traditional way
of doing it

um do I have thoughts about a more
organized approach for accepting new
members well this is just sort of a
spontaneous thing you know it's just
um

there's not really a membership list or
anything like that there's no
application forms or anything you just
feel like you want to be one at present
I mean maybe someday it'll become like
an organized movement but at present
it's just sort of floating around in the

air

um Politically Incorrect poly names went
off to start thinking out Politically
Incorrect poly names

but um yeah I'm not sure I'm not sure
about this because I mean even when I
was a monk things were taking off slow
and um

maybe I should have turned my phone off
or something even when I was a monk
things were going really slow and now
that I'm a lay person a householder if
you will I've got to work for a living I
got less time and energy for
um doing like live Dharma talks and so
forth although it's still a possibility
but uh I got bills to pay now

so

um I mean you get enough people that are interested you get like the what do you call it the uh critical mass and things can take off but it's such a like a fringe movement like most western Buddhists are like leftists and they're really not interested in traditionalism and they just ignore Asian traditionalists as though

um there are a few Buddhists of color in the west you know you read about this a lot in their literature you know we need more Buddhists of color when they're just completely ignoring all the

Southeast Asian immigrants and and Sri
Lankan immigrants and so forth so anyway
I guess I suppose I should just move on
to the next question after sort of
answering that one
and this is from Air rain
and Aaron says what is the absolute
bottom Barrel worst debauched Karma one
can generate and what is the absolute
worst karmic consequence of doing so
well according to terabadan tradition
there are five actions that if you
perpetrate any of these five you are
guaranteed of Hell in your next
existence one is to make a Buddha bleed
you can't kill a fully enlightened
Buddha but you can hurt one enough so

that he bleeds and so that's that's one
and I don't I don't know like someone's
shaving the Buddha's head and
accidentally Nick him I think they might
get like a pass on that one or something
next is to kill an aura hunt kill a
fully enlightened being hell is the
consequence third is to kill your your
mother or father
and by golly I think I might be
forgetting what one of these let's see
one of them is to start a Schism that's
the fifth one and for some reason
I can't think of what the fourth one is
although the fifth one is I mean
sometimes there's an alternative to

um creating a Schism which may be good
news for some of the early Mahayana
monks who may or may not be roasting in
Avicii hell right now and that is to
rape or seduce a nun
but why don't I remember see
to make a Buddha bleed
to kill an our hunt to kill one of your
own parents maybe three and four would
be mother or father but I don't think so
and then maybe it's just four heck I
don't know I'm my memory is not perfect
but those are like the worst things you
can do from a traditional theravada
Buddhist point of view
and I mean if your parents are awful I
mean that's still no excuse because they

did bring you into this world

um

so and then the worst the absolute worst

karmic consequence would be just the

lowest hell which is called Avicii hell

literally Avicii means without waves you

know it's just still there's no Breeze

there's nothing you know it's just still

blazing heat with like blowing iron

floors and walls and demons and so forth

and you stay there for a very long time

and I mean this is sort of a digression

I've always had my skeptical doubts

about how someone could commit an action

so bad in you know a lifetime of 70 80

90 years that they could do enough

Badness in that limited time to stay in
in Hell In uttered torment for literally
millions and millions of years it
doesn't last forever in Buddhism heaven
doesn't last forever either you know
once you've exhausted your karma you
know you you pass away from that place
and appear somewhere else but um
I used to wonder about that and then
um

I think it was when there was just this
heat wave going on in central Burma
which is hot anyway even without heat
waves and it's just you get into such a
foul mode sometimes any of you have read
Somerset mom uh you may know about how
this tropical heat can just get to

people or ruddered Kipling also like he has a short story called The End Of The Passage about two people who just crack up and die just because of the heat in the India

um and now I've I've

oh yeah so it could be that when you're in hell you're so miserable that you're just cursing the you know cursing the universe cursing yourself and it's just this perpetual

foul you know film foul mood to say the least and just really negative mental states that just keeps you there

that's my theory anyway

but just to sort of recap

Aaron's question here my answer to it I mean is the worst Karma you can generate make a Buddha bleed kill an aura hunt kill one of your parents start a Schism and maybe also rape or seduce a nun and the worst Karma consequence is the lowest hell realm which is Avicii hell that is really super icky and lasts millions of years

so the next question is from Birch and Birch says

do you find that people on your Q and A ask too many technical philosophical questions and not enough practical ones or is it or is that just par for the course maybe it's me I've spent a lot of time studying religion rather than

practicing it

it is perhaps a common human quality

yeah it's it's a common human quality

that you want to understand you know you

want questions answered as the relative

success of these q and A's demonstrates

um

I don't think that people are asking too

many technical philosophical questions I

kind of like technical philosophical

questions

um I can often answer them

relatively well I hope

so yeah it's like any kind of questions

are fair game if people want to ask that

at least they're curious about dama

which is good

and it is good to have a certain

I mean it's maybe not absolutely

necessary but it is a good thing to have

like a a relatively good grasp of the

theory

um in order to support the practice to

help you practice correctly and also

just as kind of a [__] detector as a

way of kind of weeding out some of the

the dead wood

um if that makes any sense

so yeah I'll just move on to the next

question this one is from the Arya

sawasti project

and the Arya sawasti project says

greetings Ponyo sometimes when you are

doing interviews with Brian and such
there is a photo of a thatched roof
looking structure behind you is that a
stock image or is it one of the
hermitages in Burma that you were at and
maybe I can I can show a photo as a
graphic I am getting a little more
um ambitious with regard to showing
graphics on my videos sometimes
but yeah I actually lived there but
um when I lived there long term it
wasn't as dilapidated because in that
picture there's it's a palmyra Leaf roof
covering the front of this cave that I
lived in it was called Mandalay goo goo
is Burmese for cave it's short for the

polyward guha which means cave

and um I lived there for about three
years it was one of the first places I
lived when I went to Burma

and uh I had this thatched roof over the
top of it and then I went away and went
you know living in other places and I
came back for a visit I think it was to
do uh

uh Penance for a song of DC offenses and
uh if you don't know what that means
it's fine but I went that that Monastery
used to specialize in this kind of
penance and so I came back and stayed
there for a few weeks and nobody had
been living there and so the roof had
become very much termite eaten and

dilapidated looking it was nicer when I
lived there long term I mean if
the Palmyra Leaf batch roofs are nice
ever

so yeah I did live there it's it's
called Mandalay goo and uh I've got a
number of other pictures of it I just
used that as a background because Brian
likes fake backgrounds for some reason
and uh it's at uh a monastery called
chelseindoya

in central Burma maybe 100 miles south
of Mandalay in Mandalay division
so let's see I'll just move on to the
next question this is from Andrew
and I I have to admit I do not

understand this question very well

Andrew says I don't know David how can

we be presented to the Buddha how can

one stand in front of the Buddha and say

this [__] the viral Society stated

what the [__] would he say

well um I don't know exactly what being

presented to the Buddha means and I

don't know what the viral Society is

and I don't know what the Buddha would

say if we were to say this [__] that the

viral Society stated

um just being presented to the Buddha I

mean

um I mean he's no longer in this

universe I mean in terravada Buddhism

the Buddha has

passed away he is no longer in samsara
he's not like a cosmic Buddha like a lot
of the Mahayana Buddhists believe in you
know there's no samboga Kaya up in up in
some Heaven realm somewhere
but um it reminds me of this doctor that
I knew when I was living in Mandalay goo
by the way he was the village the local
Village doctor and he spoke some English
I didn't speak much Burmese yet so we
could actually communicate a bit and uh
he used to pray to the Buddha and I used
to tell him I mean the Buddha is no
longer in this world I mean he's no
longer in any world
so what good does it do to pray to him

and he said well the Buddha could look
into the future and you know back then
he could look into the future and see me
praying

so I thought well

all right so I mean in that way you can
maybe be presented at the Buddha but
then I think what would have to happen
is you'd have to have your like
attention directed to the Buddha I mean
if if you've got the Buddha in your mind
in your heart or whatever it may be that
back then he could he could sense that
you know in some future age there's
going to be this person in this distant
land who has his you know devotion
direct towards me and you know that way

he might be aware I mean he did have a
kind of omniscience according to

um

um traditional teravana although it it
wasn't like complete omniscience like
mahavira the founder of Jainism is
supposed to have where he knows all
things at all times the Buddha could
just know what he wanted to know

um

I don't know maybe and I have no idea
what the the viral

v-i-r-e-l Society is so I really can't
comment on that

um if they said something really
inappropriate he might just remain

silent which is generally the the
approach that he would take in the in
the sutos you know somebody's really
disrespectful or something he would just
keep his mouth shut and just turn around
and walk the other way or something
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from

CEO vacch and sipad zidana and I still
don't know if I'm pronouncing it
correctly but somebody in the the
kindness of his heart actually did send
me links

um to Wikipedia articles one on CEO of
action the other one on ncpad zidana so
these were actually historical or
mythological personages C.O vax was some

Persian Aristocrat in ancient times and then sipad zidana was supposedly a king of Sumer who lived for tens of thousands of years he's like a mythological prehistoric king of of sumerors one of those early places in in Mesopotamia um anyway

says

in ancient times before 100 A.D Buddhism was considered an iconic and would leave an empty space where the Buddha was supposed to be depicted in key events in early art they used to use the feet of the Buddha Dharma wheel empty Throne horse with an empty flying Chariot thing forget the name

Etc to represent him it only began with the Greek influence first depicting the Buddha and claiming it is the bodhisatta before he became enlightened there are some there are some debate on this issue and some say that because there is only a ban on it explicitly in the sarvastivada Linea and no others that it is was just a tradition that it isn't from the Buddha himself some even claimed there was one depiction of Buddha before the Greek ones but every time I see this claim there is no citation what are your thoughts on iconography and Buddhism do you think it has been an overall positive or negative what do you think would be the Buddha's opinion on

iconography such as art depicting a more
monasteries being full of statues that
attempt to portray his physical likeness
well I mean there's a lot of stuff I
could address with regard to this what
CEO of action and C5 zidana says is true
that originally in the earliest Buddhist
art

um they would there would just be like
an empty seat or a footprint or a body
leaf or something just to represent the
Buddha indirectly because the the
emphasis or the point they were trying
to make is that the boot is no longer in
this world like I mentioned earlier he
is no longer in any world he's no longer

in samsara he has attained nibana he is off the scale and so originally in the oldest Buddhist art he would not be portrayed and then

um one of the main theories is that it started with the Greeks

and there was around the same time there were two places where the the earliest Buddha statues arose one is in the Greek kingdoms of Northwestern India which should now be mostly Pakistan and

Afghanistan I think and the other one was in the city of mathura

where it also could have started but matura was within the Greek sphere of influence like uh King minandros who's called Melinda

um in tarabada Buddhism actually invaded
mathura and it was within his sphere of
influence of his kingdom so it could be
that even if the earliest statues began
in mathura it could still have been
Greek influence

um claiming that these statues were of
the bodhisatta and not of the Buddha
himself thereby kind of justifying
having an image of the man reminds me
that most Buddha statues in Burma I'm
not sure about other Buddhist countries
but most Buddhist statues in Burma
technically are of the bodhisatta before
it became enlightened because it's in
the in poly be called the bhumī Pasa

um mudra I guess mudra would be Sanskrit
it's the boomi sparsha mudra where the
Buddha I mean I'm sitting down you can't
really see it he's got one hand like
this in his lap he's sitting
cross-legged and the other hand is like
this touching the ground
and that was from the night of his
Enlightenment before it became
enlightened so most of the Buddha
statues you see in Burma technically
speaking he wasn't the Buddha yet
and the whole boomi sparsa
mudra I might be butchering the Sanskrit
there is I mean the reason why he's
touching the ground with one hand is
that according to the legend when he sat

down to meditate he was firmly intent on becoming enlightened and Mara the evil one you know sort of the Lord of samsara came and was trying to get him to stop because he didn't want anyone to escape from his his Empire so to speak and so he says you know you have no right to be sitting here or some such and the Buddha touched the ground to I mean calling upon the Earth as his witness that he had the right to sit there and that's uh that's where that's the mudra or the the hand position you know the different hand positions of the Buddha have different meanings like my personal favorite is John amudra like the little

white marble statue up there where he's
just sitting in meditation and that's
um that one indicates his actual
Enlightenment where he is enlightened at
that point this is the John moodra the
meditation mudra and um

the one the one over here the Sleepy
Buddha where he's kind of going like
like this it's it's not Orthodox you
don't see that one in in Burma that's I
don't know where that came from

maybe Mahayana Buddhism or something
so anyway let's see here

um

I I didn't I'd never even heard that
it's that Buddha images are explicitly
against the cerebellum Venia

um sovasivada arose before the Greeks started making statues I think saravastivada officially became a sect of Buddhism at around the third Council which would be during the the reign of the emperor Ashoka which was before the Greeks came it was after the mauryan Empire uh was just collapsing that the Greeks came in and got some easy scores um so it could be just a late rule added to servosity or it could be which was like a unattended reform movement on servos de Vada

um

it isn't from the Buddha himself well I mean it just wasn't a thing in the

Buddhist time

I mean that's then they just didn't make statues like that it was the Greeks or really in the Statue so that's one of the bits of evidence that the Greeks actually started making Buddha statues after the after they invaded India and converted to Buddhism

um

let's see one of my thoughts on iconography and Buddhism I really am indifferent I'm I'm the sort of person that and rarely would I bow down to a Buddha statue I think I have bowed down to that one before I've never bowed down to the not an orthodox one um for the most part I wouldn't bow like

before a ceremony in Burma all the other monks would be bowing to the Statue because in Burma they're very Faith oriented and devotionalistic and they bow to the Statue and I'd just be sitting there kind of looking at them or you know just looking at the Statue um

and sometimes you know they try and talk me into it you know oh you get Merit if you bow to the Statue and I just say Meredith is for Lay people monks are supposed to go beyond that sort of thing um but yeah the Buddha wouldn't I don't think the Buddha would encourage anyone to make statues of him any more than

he'd encourage people to worship Him
um but then again there are some pseudos
where he's doing exactly that not with
regard to the statues because
the the sutas were finished the poly
sutas were done and before anyone ever
thought of making a Buddha statue
probably or before anyone actually made
one before it went mainstream for sure
so and the the attempt to portray is
physical likeness I don't even know if
they're seriously trying to portray the
physical likeness of the Buddha because
in Burma the Buddha looks kind of plump
and effeminate looking and kind of
Burmese looking Chinese Buddha statues
look Chinese Japanese Buddha statues

Japanese the Greek the earliest Greek
Buddha statues he looked Greek he looked
at European
um and nobody really knows what he looks
like other than you know some fairly
sketchy descriptions of what he looked
like and he was tall relatively thin
presumably you know he had aristocratic
features probably more or less European
like Indo-European features probably
like a straight nose and high forehead
and maybe thin lips gold and colored
skin supposedly
um but people just make the statue so
that the Buddha looks like the ethnicity
of the culture in which the statue is

made and I don't know for some people it
can be helpful for some people it may be
a hindrance

um I really don't think it's all that
important so long as you're not thinking
that the statue is actually somehow the
Buddha

I mean I would I wouldn't definitely
wouldn't spit on it you know I mean I I
might not bow to a statue but I wouldn't
just be like flagrantly disrespectful
either

that um I mean it's sort of a reminder
of go to My Buddha or a reminder of this
man who was just you know fully
enlightened brilliant philosopher just
you know a genius a saint so I mean he's

worthy of respect regardless even if
you're not a if you even if you're not a
Buddhist

so I mean to each his own

um I don't really have a dog in the
fight tell you the truth

so I'll just move on to CEO of action

sipad zidane's next question

and according to him like and I quote

this is going to be a long multi-part

question in all parts of it come from

the relatively long Mula party Yaya suta

from the majikaya

this seems to be a relatively early text

as it has parallel rescensions found in

the Chinese

rather than in the majjima agama the sutta
begins with the Buddha saying mendicants
I will teach you the explanation of the
root of all things

so part one of his question here

the Buddha lists various things like the
elements the senses Gods meditative

States unification diversity the all and
nibbana and Compares how a worldling

and the tathagata sees them this seems to

be closer to how the abhidhamma emphasizes

nibbana as just part of a list rather

than putting special emphasis on it like

Mahayana do although not exactly the

same as either what are your thoughts on

this well I haven't read the ulesuttanta

in quite a long time it's been years I

don't recall it vividly

um but

as a general rule if I read a sutra in

which they are like dividing up samsara

or just the entire Cosmos and

classifying it then I would not consider

that suited to be extremely early the

very fact that it's also in a Chinese

translation that it's also found in other

early texts it just means that

um it predates the first

the first schism

and that's why it was like a hundred

years after the time of the Buddha and

anyone familiar with the the history of

early Christianity can say can tell you

that a heck of a lot of mutation and additions can arise in a hundred years so um it could be relatively late even though it was early enough to be before the first Schism still it's not necessarily what the Buddha was actually teaching

ah so uh

let's see what's the question here what are your thoughts on this those are my thoughts I guess so I'll just move on to part two of this question

the Buddha doesn't call nibana an Ultimate Reality but instead talks about the way we perceive the various things listed above how we identify with them cling to them and all of it is a result

of not knowing them properly most
Scholars take this to mean that the
Buddha is saying that there is no true
root of all things but I can also see it
as possibly saying ignorance is the root
of all things what's your opinion on
this well ignorance is the root of
samsara

but or ignorance or delusion either one
take your pick kind of a
like a semi-conscious stupidity would be
a good but long rendering of mohawk
um or avija is just ignorance but it's
ignorance in the sense that you're not
seeing the full picture you're not
seeing total reality you're just seeing

this limited little slice of reality and
distorting even that and considering
that to be the reality and on and on uh
we need to get into that too much but um
let's see the Buddha is saying that
there is no true root of all things this
is the tricky part and it's really hard
to just really hard to explain this I've
tried it many times but when you get to
the absolute

I mean it transcends Duality the
absolute transcends Duality so it
transcends The Duality of is and isn't
existence and non-existence

so

um

in a way it's quite sort of like the

kantian thing in itself or or something
like that but even Kant would say that
the thing in itself really exists
and uh

like the root of all things some yeah
it's like in there are suits some
suitors where the Buddha just says
everything is without essence you know
there's there's no root but then
um in other sutas I mean there is I mean
when you get to abhidham I mean
obviously they think everything that
truly exists all these little Rupa
kalapas these little particles that
compose the entire universe particles of
of matter and mind that they're all

ultimately real even though they last
only a trillionth of a second
so let's see what is my opinion on this
uh

most Scholars take this to mean that the
Buddhists saying yeah well I mean I'd
have to read the sutra again but just
from what I've heard about this I would
be skeptical that that it's really an
archaic sutra that goes all the way back
or even really close to the buddhism
this one might have been right under the
wire when towards the end of this
hundred years of growth and expansion
and like mutation of Buddhist Doctrine
um there are starting to be more and
more diversity and classification

schemes and so forth and that's probably where taravana became known as vibaja Vada which is like the the doctrine of uh like discrimination just distinguishing this from that and um you know the the early terravans were taking pride in that but um yeah

I really don't think that the Buddha was really I think he was teaching pretty much the opposite of like discriminating this from that maybe at like a relatively Elementary level for Lay people you have to discriminate right from wrong that kind of a thing but when you're getting up into the upper levels

distinguishing this from that that's
papancha and that's like the root of
delusion and you're eventually gonna
have to leave that behind I think the
Buddha was a radical Mystic
so I'll just move on to part three of
this Quest this question
okay determine poly used is nibana but
in English they usually translate it
here to extinguishment or unbinding yeah
that unbinding that's ajan tanisiro's
pet pet you know rendering for it this
makes it seem to be in contrast to the
all that the Buddha mentions before it
to make them seem like complete
opposites
before that the Buddha talks about unity

and diversity as opposite as well what
do you make of the Buddha using the
words the all and nibana as opposites
well they all would be like samsara that
would be the samsarik all because
Nirvana really I mean it doesn't have an
opposite really but nibana and samsara
really aren't opposites I mean I mean
just sort of intuitively you consider
nubana and samsara to be opposites but
really they aren't because nibana
doesn't have an opposite because it's
just beyond dualism you have to have
dualism in order for there to be an
opposite
so let's see I'm

uh the term Paul uses in English they usually translate here as extinguishment or mining literally regardless of what people like John tanisro try to tell you literally nibana means blowing out like like a fire like a candle flame is it blown out and there's actually um references to that in the tsujini Pata you know just as a flame when it's blown out by the force of wind goes to its cessation and no longer subjects itself to any designation so too the arhant when he you know when he is blown out he's you know he's comes to a cessation and no longer subjects himself to any designation

but

um ajan denisro did point out that in
ancient India fire was considered to be
a god Agni who has

um I think he's like the second the
second most popular God in the rig Veda
like the second highest number of hymns
are dedicated to Agni the god of fire
because he was the god of the sacrifice
and The Vedas are largely sacrificial
hymns that were recited at fire
sacrifices

um and the God I mean he exists
regardless of whether there's a flame
there's like a latent there's like
latent Flame

that that's there even if there's no
actual flame burning and so ajanta
argues that nibana is kind of like that
I mean you just kind of go back into
this unformed in KOA state after you
become enlightened but

um

I mean trying to understand nibana
intellectually is is a Fool's errand or
maybe an intellectual Fool's errand
because you really can't understand
nibana by thinking about it you can't
understand Ultimate Reality by thinking
about it because it just transcends
Duality and the thinking mind works in
duality
so let's see

what do you make of the Buddha using the words the all and nibana as opposites um well I mean there is another suta where the all is defined as the i i Consciousness and the visual you know the sense datum and the ear and ear Consciousness in the auditory since datum and you know the nose and nose Consciousness and the olfactory and sense datum and it's all just a matter of of

um

this the five the six senses because mind is considered to be the sixth sense and you know the six senses and what is experienced through the six senses

so

mind glandular secretions

so

um it's just manner of speech because
truly nibana does not have an opposite
which kind of opened the door to the
Mahayana Buddha saying that ultimately
nibana and samsara are the same like
I've said a number of times if you if
you say that nibana is just for the
convenience say that nibana is the
essence of reality

then samsara is the form you know the
gold ring it's the essence is gold and
ring you know the thing with the hole in
it is the form

um I mean you have to have both at least

you have to have the essence you can't
have you can't have the gold ring
without the gold you can have gold
without the ring but you can't have a
ring the gold ring without the gold I
mean there has to be a substance or an
essence

and I'm going to be more inclined to
consider nibana it's the uncarved block
and all these virtual statues that you
know that are created by Mind through
imagination of just kind of seeing it in
the block or whatever I mean just for
the sake of argument I mean I don't want
to try and uh beat the the dead horse in
here but um

yeah

so let's see I'll just move on to part

four of CEO of actionaza

complex question here the ending of the

suto says in a Twist of events that is

what the Buddha said but the mendicants

were not happy with what the Buddha said

the commentaries explained that they

were not happy because they were

brahmanas and this went against the idea

of Ultimate Reality they had before

being Buddhists so it shook them to me

it seems like this reaction wouldn't

happen if the Buddha taught the exact

same concept as Brahman as the

upanishadic sages what are your thoughts

on this again I haven't read the suto

Recently I don't have like a clear
recollection of it

um I

it probably does not indicate that all
of the monks were brahmanas

um it could just be that it's just human
nature you want there to be a reality
that you can understand and grasp and
he's just pulling the rug out from under
them

and if you read something like the
antagawaga which I talk about rather a
lot

I mean it really does it just pulls the
rug right out from under you there's
nothing that you can cling to nothing

that you can grasp just nothing I mean
you can't even grasp onto nothingness
you can't even cling to that there's you
know it's the empty set it's not even
zero

and uh I mean most people especially if
they're just not right for full

Enlightenment that's kind of scary and
unsettling and people want a certain
security including intellectual security
at least they want to know what's what
and when the Buddha is just like saying
you know there isn't any just just
forget it you know it's

no

um yeah that's that's unsettling and
probably even though the monks maybe

weren't brahmanas they were probably
unenlightened you know they weren't they
weren't fully enlightened yet and so it
just was kind of scary to them or you
know it just again it's just sort of
pulling the rug out from one of them
so um

yeah the Buddha wasn't teaching the
exact same concept of Vermont in the
upanishadic upanishadic sages because
the upanishads reify

the absolute and in that's like one the
Buddha went like one step further where
he's not even trying to reify it I mean
he's I mean you can't explain it in
words and so he would just like not even

try it you know he it's just off the
scale

you know your mouth is the name that can
be named is not the Eternal name

and so I mean for the most part he would
just sort of dance around it maybe maybe

hint at it a little bit it's not this

it's not that you know like the

upanishad says in 1890 not this not that

but um

yeah I think I'll just move on to CEO

Fox and sipad zidane's next question

because as I say we've got quite a lot

of them which is uh generally the case

lately and I may have to start doing it

once a week because I keep saying

so

of actions

the next question is in the Simsapa Sutta

the Buddha picked up a handful of leaves

and said that what he teaches is like

the handful of leaves and that what he

knows from direct knowledge but doesn't

teach is like the whole Forest he only

teaches suffering it's cause it's

cessation and the path of its cessation

uh because that is what is useful for

the holy life and reaching the goal and

I just want to say that CEO of action

totally unnecessarily added apostrophes

to its

I'm a grammar Nazi I'm sorry

so

um

oh wait he continues

based on this do you think the whole

Forest is what every aroha achieves upon

Enlightenment or do our Hans achieve the

ultimate goal with just the handful of

leaves amount of knowledge like a sailor

and having to travel all over the ocean

to reach an island if someone who has

reached the destination already has made

a map and the Buddha's own vast

knowledge came as a result of traveling

all over the ocean before finding the

island metaphorically

well

um this is kind of a it's a good

question and sort of a subtle one more

subtle than it it seems at first glance
um yeah there is the sutta where the
Buddha is in the Simsapa Grove I can't
remember what species of trees some Sapa
trees are but yeah he holds up a handful
and says you know what I teach you is
like this but I know like all the leaves
in the forest amount of knowledge
and

I mean you can say just from the
traditional point of view from the
Orthodox Terabond point of view the
Buddha had as I mentioned earlier a kind
of uh omniscience
what's so when you die because he knows
all things if he wants to I mean he has

to like attend to it in order to know it
and that would apply only to a fully
enlightened Buddha not to an ordinary
Aura hunt

and there are in the in the sut as
mentions of dry visioned arohans who
haven't acquired any psychic powers you
know they don't have any miraculous
powers like that you know they haven't
become paranormal Superman they just no
longer have craving an attachment
and so

um I would be inclined to think that the
original meaning of the sutta is that
even an auron might see more leaves you
know somebody like sorry puta or
mogalana you know they they have a way

bigger handful of leaves at the very
least that they would know of
but um

yeah I don't think that they would be
considered omniscient

but then again if you want to look at it
in a different way and this could be a
relatively late suto but if you want to
look at it in a different way then I
mean when you're enlightened you're
seeing Ultimate Reality you know
alternate reality which is the whole
Forest whereas

um you know the Normie the butujana he's
he's got ignorance which prevents him
from being enlightened and that limits

the amount of what he's able to see so
you could really interpret it in both
ways

and I'm not sure exactly what the
original meaning was I don't want to
second guess the uh the Buddha or
whoever is the author of The suta
but it could be interpreted both ways
but probably the Orthodox explanation is
that the Buddha was omniscient and even
a fully enlightened Aaron hunt
who isn't a the target
um that he wouldn't see as many leaves
as the Buddha did
so I'll just move on to the next
question and this is from Dharma
and Dharma says did your parents pass

away while you were in Burma
where were you able to attain their
funeral and did you wear your robe
called doing so well it turns out that
both of my parents did die while I was
in Burma

um in fact when my father died I didn't
even hear about I was living in a cave
out in the woods didn't hear about it
until maybe two weeks later and it was
kind of a strange situation I might as
well digress

in that I went for alms around in this
village lemie Village and one of the the
people there had received a phone call
from Rangoon had received a message from

Rangoon I should say telling me that my teacher venerable Poco Seattle were also known as uh Tom Pulu Charleston doya Seattle he had passed away so I asked this lady could she make a phone call and find out when the funeral was going to be because I wanted to attend Seattle's funeral he was like my main teacher in Burma so back in those days in order to make a phone call you had to get in a boat and cross the children River to a village on the other side of the river that actually had a foam this is before cell phones and stuff made it to Burma so uh later on that day she came to visit me in my cave

and she said in just the softest voice I
have some bad news to tell you do you
want to hear it and right then I knew my
father must have died
and that was that was the case and um
I just had this empty feeling in my
chest I didn't cry but I had just this
emptiness in my chest I made like this
little I had a picture of my dad put it
on the altar you know all for little
flowers too I wished him well

um

and when my mother died I was in Rangoon
and uh I just got an email this was back
when finally there was some semblance of
internet in Burma but it was really

really crappy like 1G something like
that

and uh it was my brother who was
destroyed telling me that my mother had
died and I mean when you're a monk you
have no money you can't just uh Rush
down into the travel agency and buy a
ticket I mean you're dependent upon the
generosity of

lay people and in Burma there's not a
whole lot of really wealthy lay people I
probably couldn't have made it back
before the funeral anyway

so yeah the answer is

um yeah my parents passed away while I
was a monk in Burma and I was not able
to attend their funeral although I did

attend my stepbrother's wedding as a monk dressed in Monk's robes which uh probably the Christian minister he didn't seem real thrilled about it but there's not much he could say so we'll just move on to dharma's next question

have you ever been interested in the Hari Krishna movement also known as the international Society for Krishna Consciousness I just learned that its founder

what is this srila prabhupada had some pretty negative views about blacks Jews and homosexuals um to tell you the truth I've never

really been interested in Hari Krishnas
it's so Faith oriented in fact
um Hari Krishna guy gave me a book once
it was um and it was a warning against
Hare Krishnas even associating with
meditators they're not supposed to have
anything to do with meditators a
meditators called something like a
Moksha Vaden who thinks that you can
actually become enlightened through
self-cultivation rather than just
reciting the names of God over and over
and over again
um so I just I've never been
devotionalistic really
I mean I've had moments but just by
temperament I'm just not a devotionalist

and so no I've never really been much interested in Hari krishna's but they had a really good vegetarian restaurant in Seattle I remember I used to go there sometimes back when I was a vegetarian um and regardless I mean prabhupada's negative views about black to Jews and homosexuals and this irrelevant I suppose so we'll just move on to dharma's next question

have you ever been so sexually frustrated that you began to find another Monk attractive no not never have I mean I've I've met a few monks they're like young monks that you know

you because they're Asian I suppose
partly partly because they're Asian they
had they'd have like feminine features
and you could think wow if he was a girl
he'd be really pretty but still I mean I
wasn't actually attracted to them I have
been so sexually frustrated when I was a
monk that I'd be I'd find my own naked
leg when I was taking a bath attracted
look down seeing naked my own naked leg
you know that could be stimulating
somehow

but that's more autoerotic than
homoerotic

so yeah I've never been so sexually
frustrated that I began to find another
Monk attractive

although I mean if there's a guy who's a handsome guy you can acknowledge he's handsome but that's not the same as being sexually attracted to them so dharma's next question is homoerotic behavior between monks forbidden like hugging and sleeping in the same bed yes it is forbidden um

it's a serious offense for a monk to touch a woman with lust he's got a he's gotta if he touches a woman and enjoys it and does anything to establish or prolong the contact then he's got to do Penance for six days and six nights if he feels the same way

or while touching a eunuch you know
someone who's technically not fully male
or female upon the cop then that is a
Tula Chaya offense which is a serious
offense but at least
um you can clear it through making
confession
but if you touch a man and experience
lust then that's just the Duke of
offense it's still against the rules but
it's a minor offense and you just make
confession and and that kind of pushes
reset or something
and so hugging a man in in a kind of
homoerotic behavior it would be against
the rules it would be a ducat offense
and if if both or if like one of them

the man that you're hugging is let's say
he's just really like
how just what's the word like a flaming
homosexual he might qualify as a pawn to
come so that could be a tooleach high
offense but still it's not as serious as
touching a woman with lust
and uh sleeping in the same bed is
against the rules it's also a minor
offense but monks aren't allowed to
sleep on the same bed or sleep on the
same mat or sleep under the same blanket
that's against the rules
so there was some uh
uh attempts to prevent that sort of
thing in terrible Buddhism

and uh

I mean it still happens I'm sure but uh
it's not as rampant as the stuff you're
hearing about like in uh Roman
Catholicism the Roman Catholic cleared
you

so the next question from Dharma was the
universe created according to Buddhism
and if yes who created it well I mean
the boot the universe had no original
creation you know there wasn't one day
when all of a sudden the universe came
into existence the universe has always
been here samsara is beginningless and
presumably endless
you know all beings are not going to
become saved like like the Mahayana

Buddhists

um vow to do

I mean the universe has already been
here an infinitely long amount of time
and there's still countless numbers of
suffering beings apparently at least you
know from the samsari perspective
so I think the only way you can save all
beings is to become enlightened and
realize that all these individual beings
that are supposedly suffering are just
virtually or conditionally real and not
ultimately real
but I mean in a way the universe is
created but it's created Moment by
moment through the power of of Karma and

ignorance and delusion so it's the
it's

just this beginningless

Karma and ignorance and delusion is just
sort of generating some sorrow from
moment to moment

so I'll just move on to dharma's next
question

what are your thoughts on monasteries in
the west where bikus and bikunis lived
together isn't this almost impossible
according to the sutas since the Buddha
said the following in the denikaya quote
how shall we relate to women Master do
not look at them but if if one sees one
master do not address her but if one
talks to us

keep mindfulness and self-control and if I remember correctly that was Ananda the Buddha's attendant and cousin asking the Buddha you know what do we do about women who says don't look at them and then Anonymous says yeah but if they're like standing in front of you you can't help but see them just don't talk to them and it's oh what if they talk to us first I mean what we have to engage somehow it says you need to be very careful be very Mindful and um there is a sutra I don't remember which one I might be in the Anguttara Nikaya or something that says one of the signs of the decay of Buddhism you know the

decline of Dharma in the world is there
will be monasteries where monks and nuns
are living together

not necessarily sleeping together all
they have to do is just be living in the
same Monastery and that is a sign that
Buddhism is on the downhill slide

so

let's see what are my thoughts on
monasteries in the west

um yeah it's probably best not to do it
every once in a while even in Burma

because there are places like that in
Burma too like mahasi centers you know

they'll have I mean they're not in

bikinis but because in Burma there are

no bikunis you know just in traditional

theravada Buddhist countries at least in
Thailand and and Burma I'm not sure
about Sri Lanka

but they just I mean the ecclesiastical
system just does not acknowledge the
validity of ordained nuns anymore so
you've got nuns but they they follow
like eight or ten precepts they don't
follow the full linear rules you know
they were in I think in Thailand they
were white in Burma they usually wear
sort of a pink color or like a peach
color with some brown

um

but those kind of nuns will live at the
same Monastery or Meditation Center as

fully ordained monks and every once in a while you'll have some Scandal of some none and some Monk just run off together that's that's happened uh in the west also I have heard so

yeah it's it's not a good idea maybe it's seen as just sort of necessity in the west because there's so there's limited resources for supporting monasteries and so forth but um it is it is a sign of decline according to the the poly texts

so I'll just move on to the next question this is from Sacha and Sasha says I find the commentaries to be of great value what do you think

of them well

I consider I think the Burmese

considered the commentaries to be even

more important than the Bali texts

because

I mean if in the sutta itself the

Buddha says blue but in the commentary

it says when the Buddha said blue what

he really meant was red if you don't

have the commentary you're not going to

know that when it says blue in the text

it really means red

and there is a lot of that like

um there is the the uh the scene in

vinya there's a narrative where the the

Buddha says that

um because of the ordination of nuns the Buddhist Asana Will Survive for only 500 years and then in the commentary it says well when he said 500 years what he meant was 5 000 years and why he would say five thousand if he meant 500

I mean that's just silly but by the time the commentaries were composed in medieval Sri Lanka approximately a thousand years later at least the the versions that we have today you know reach pretty much their final form you know over a thousand years later after the time of the Buddha I mean obviously the 500 years had already elapsed and they can't say well the Buddha was wrong or you know this just is just spurious

it was added later you know it's not genuine teaching of the Buddha they couldn't adopt either of those recourses like like a modern Western can do so they just say Well when he said 500 he meant 5 000 and just kind of that's the best they could do to kind of patch up the situation but um the commentaries you're better off not relying on them I mean if you can use your own intuition you just read the text let it flow through your mind and just some a lot of the time it'll just click you know it's like intuitively you'll be able to make sense of at least most of

it and some of it you may not understand
and there's a good chance the
commentators also wouldn't understand
they make a lot of wild guesses and the
trouble is they don't admit that they're
making wild guesses they say you know
this is what it means even though
they're guessing and sometimes they
guess wrong

so I really don't have much use for
buddigosis as opposed to Buddhism

um Buddha Gosa of course being the um
the main

um editor and compiler of most of or a
lot of the the automatas or taravana

Buddhist commentaries and he is the
author of The wisudi Maga which is sort

of like the the central Hub of all the
commentaries you know it's like the main
commentarial

um text in terrible Buddhism

so sometimes though

um there's like a certain poly word that
occurs only once or twice in the entire
pitica like in Linea you know it'll have
this word that you don't know what it
means you've never seen that word before
so you can look in the commentary to
kind of get an idea

you know it's like they'll say this but

I mean it's just an idea it's just a

suggestion because there's a good chance

they don't know either but they can't

admit that they don't know so they'll
just come up with something they'll meet
their best guess which maybe isn't a
very good guess

so I wouldn't rely on the commentaries
any more than you have to

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from David

what do you make of Dr Ian Stevenson's
work I remember reading hone Kenneth's
work which alluded to her lameness being
accountable from her previous Karma as a
tiger I don't find it Fantastical at all
I'm fairly sure rebirth is real from
experience and a logical point of view
many thanks well I have read two books
by Dr Ian Stevenson and he was

um he was a psychologist I think I think
it was the University of Virginia
and he was trying to find scientific
evidence to support the idea of rebirth
or reincarnation and
um most of what he was doing especially
in his his earlier several books was
locating young children like small
children who remembered previous lives
and sometimes they could come up with
information about you know where they
lived you know who their family members
were who their friends were how they
died and then that could be verified and
sometimes like in the ideal case for Dr
Stevenson he'd find the child before

um there had been any contact between
you know this child and this other
existence other family that the the
child supposedly died out of
and it's really interesting a lot of it
I mean you can call it circumstantial
evidence and maybe there's some frauds
involved but some of it's uh yeah it's
it's it's definitely considerable
evidence and then I guess later on I
didn't read any books on the subject
um by him but he was uh starting to
specialize in people born with strange
birthmarks that somehow they were
related to something that happened to
him in previous existence and that
um I think I might have a strange kind

of mark on my body that's derived from a
previous existence I've got like this
purple spot

um

like over a certain lymph node on my
body and uh I think there's a good
chance that that's where the bubo was
that killed me when I died a Bubonic
plague in the 14th century

a lot of people did die a Bubonic plague
in the first 14th century like one-third
of the Earth's population

but I mean it's just all you can't
really prove it one way or the other
it's just very interesting and you're
probably better off not spending too

much time and energy you know trying to
to figure it out or get proof or
anything because I don't think you're
ever going to really be able to prove it
one way or the other but um yeah Dr Ian
Stevenson's work is is well worth
reading

um especially if you're open-minded yet
still somewhat skeptical of the idea of
rebirth he does present some
more or less scientific evidence for
rebirth

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Casey
in case he asks

can I ask why you left the Washington
area

well I grew up in Washington state in
the Pacific Northwest
um of the United States
and the first time I left it was to
become a monk I was living in Bellingham
near the Canadian border
um before I became a monk and so the
first time I left was to become a monk
and then I came back and tried to live
in Bellingham again in 2011 and made
some some efforts over the next couple
years
and uh it just
I it just didn't work out it turns out
that later on I I met this old Burmese
lady who actually bought a house for a

friend of mine a monk friend of mine
near Seattle and was I mean she was
supporting him living there and if that
had happened to me it might have it
might have really struck traction or
something but it didn't happen to me it
happened to him instead and uh yeah it's
just I just wasn't getting enough
support I mean I had some generous
supporters that were happy to support me
enthusiastic about it but I didn't want
to be a burden on them I mean it was
just you know in single digits the
number of people who were willing to
bring me food every day and that sort of
thing you know offer me shelter and that
sort of thing and so I was living from

hand to mouth which is good for a monk
to live from hand to mouth you know a
monk is supposed to live from hand to
mouth but still in in America it just
wasn't working out very well so
eventually I just went back to Burma
and started like commuting back and
forth between Burma and California where
there's a large Burmese Community
willing to support monks ordained in a
Burmese tradition which was not the case
in Northwestern Washington State
so it was largely uh just a matter of
support at the time
and kec also asked a question there were
a number of questions that I mean they

haven't really made the cut of this list because they were like rhetorical questions or something he asked what is bit shoot which is it's like an alternative to YouTube with uh less censorship and an attempted thought control on the part of the uh the people who manage it so I'll just move on to the next question here this is from Johannes and Johannes has asked a number of questions here and uh his first question is do you have some experience with the Sri Lankan theravada I seriously think about ordaining in the coming years probably in two years when my current project of

building a meditation center is finished
I thought Sri Lanka might be good since
they speak English there and they had
some quite appealing Masters in the last
century I came out in the anaponica in
parentheses do you think it's an
authentic taravada that is practiced
there especially in regards to rules and
knowledge of the Pali scriptures I also
wish to become a Wandering ascetic at
one point what in Thailand is called
tudong do you maybe know if this is a
common practice in Sri Lanka okay well
for the most part the mainstream of
theravada Buddhist monasticism in Sri
Lanka is just corrupt as hell I mean

there's very little monastic discipline
there anymore

um it's very corrupt as a general rule
just with regard to the mainstream

you know most I mean it's very few Sri
Lankan monks even make token effort to
really follow the rules strictly

um they're they're very nice and they
speak English even in their monasteries
in the west unlike most Thai and Burmese
probably other

um Asian ethnicities like well they
speak English they're unlike like you go
to a Burmese temple or a Thai temple
they'll be speaking mostly Burmese or
Thai inside the temple whereas in Sri
Lanka they're mostly just speaking

English partly because at least the the
Sri Lankan temples I I went to I visited
um in America
they uh
is the supporters or Sri Lankan
professionals like engineers and
computer programmers and so forth that
um they're just really intelligent they
speak good English I guess in Sri Lanka
there's just a culture just try going
back to British colonialism where
educated people speak good English
um but there is like a reform movement
like a forest tradition in Sri Lanka
that is serious so if you wanted to
ordain there and be a serious monk you'd

have to find

um like some Monastery or some some uh

senior monk some Tara who's in this

Forest tradition that is actually trying
to walk the talk

like Sri Lankan amongst a lot of them it
might even be the majority of Sri Lankan
monks don't even consider it to be

possible to become enlightened anymore

that it's just we're like in the Kali

Yuga or something it's a degenerate age

people just can't become enlightened so

they just consider to be their duty to

memorize the text or to understand the

text and teach the text preserve the

poly texts in case things get better in

the future

uh at least they're helping people to
get some dhamma you know in this life
even though according to them you can't
become enlightened anymore but I'm
pretty sure that they're among striving
for enlightenment out in the forests in
this sort of it's a relatively recent
movement in Sri Lanka or so I have read
and heard

but um it might be that you would prefer
Thailand where there is the the two dong
tradition I'm not sure I assume there is
some some like

um nutanga in Sri Lanka among these
serious Forest Aesthetics but I really
don't know a heck of a lot about it but

I'm sure you could find out some some
good information on the subject before
you go to Sri Lanka to be ordained I
mean you should you should find out who
is who's good what's it where where are
the good places or at least one good
place before you go there unless you've
got a lot of money and time to just tour
the country and look for some place and
some teacher that resonates with you
that can that could work too

so I'll just move on to the next
question from Johannes

I assume it's pronounced Johannes
did you have a favorite dotonga one
where you had the impression it helped
you greatly on your path

um eating one meal a day was was helpful
I like that I ate one meal a day for
almost every single day for 30 years
sometimes there'd be a few exceptions
like you're on a plane crossing the
Pacific Ocean and you're just sitting
there and for hours and hours and
anything that they'd give me in the
morning I'd eat although technically it
didn't break the new tongue as long as I
didn't get up in between
because it's just one sitting it's not
one meal it's one sitting
um another dutonga that was helpful was
the alms around utonga and they were for
a long time I seriously followed now I

would only eat food that I had collected in the village in my bowl of course it's not going to work so well in America I think there are a few monks that that at least go for alms around in the west and actually collect food that way I've been told that one way that they do this is stand in front of a grocery store and explain to people they don't accept money but you know they'll accept you know food that gets put in there into their bowl

so yeah eating only all food I mean sometimes you might have to fast for a few days if you're traveling and it's just not working out but um yeah that that was a good one too and it does keep

you from getting spoiled like once you have your own Monastery people are going to be wanting to bring you food and uh you can just sort of hold them at Bay by saying I only eat alms food so I'll just move on to the next question

this is also from Johannes when practicing dotonga of not lying down are we allowed to lean against something like the back of a couch and are we allowed to sleep

uh well of course you're allowed to sleep I mean you go without sleep long enough and you're gonna crack up a friend of mine actually did this because

of the sitting dutonga

um if you read the wisudi Manga I'm

pretty sure it's the second chapter of

the wisudi manga it's all about dutonga

it's just a list an explanation of the

13 dutongas which are optional ascetic

practices

and each dutonga has three levels it's

like hard medium and easy

and the dog just came in

how you doing

so

um with regard to the sitting new Tonga

the sitters practice

um easy is you're allowed to sit in a

chair

and uh the monastery or the tradition in

which I was ordained the tongpulu
tradition

all the monks were supposed to do the
sitter's practice they did not lie down
when they slept

so the easy most of them follow the easy
level

which was you can you can use a chair so
they had kind of like a wicker kind of
almost a reclining chair and I would
consider anything more than a 45 degrees
you know you get Beyond 45 and you're
lying down you're as long as you're more
vertical than horizontal you know so
like at least like that

I think technically you could still be

doing the sinner's practice at least at
the easy level

um when I was a young monk doing the
sitters practice

um

I followed the intermediate the medium
level which is you're allowed to lean
back against a board or another

alternative is you can take like a rope
or a belt or something and you sit with
your knees up and you just kind of wrap
it around your back and your like your
shins and that kind of holds you up with
your knees up but

um it seems like that would be really
rough when you're behind after a while
it's just all your weight just on this

small amount of Flesh I don't think it would be comfortable you'd probably be better off leaning back against a board or something just leaning back against the wall is too vertical I mean you have to lean back at least a little bit and uh hard the hard level you can't lean against anything you can't lean back against anything so you got to be just sitting there as though in meditation I guess way blue Seattle of Burma who was considered to be an araha would sleep that way and I had this friend who was trying to do all of the jutongas at the hardest level he was just like this Buddhist

Rambo

he uh wasn't really following the middle path he was most people strayed towards the self-indulgence side you know instead of the mental path they kind of veered towards you know excessive comfort and so forth he veered the other way he veered towards self-torture and uh he but even so I mean he just could not sleep just sitting upright so he put his arms ball in front of him and leaned forwards and just kind of rest his forehead on his arms ball and uh he he eventually cracked up largely through lack of sleep just sleep deprivation caused him to crack up and um he had to be sent home to America he was

in Asia at the time he was sent home to America it was like the the Ambassador or one of the consuls or something had to like help him get on the plane because he was pretty much out of it for a while and as soon as he got better he just came right back to Burma I think and and reordained I think he reordained in Burma under uh tompoo Seattle so

those are the the three levels I mean the other all of the dutongas have three levels like easy medium and hard so I'll just move on to johannes's next question what would you as a monk do on upositon

is it important for laypeople and do you think the moon has an impact on our meditation and mindfulness and our energy level

well you posted up for those of you who aren't familiar

um it's every it's sort of like the Buddhist Sabbath it's sort of like the Buddhist equivalent of Sunday or Saturday

if if you're that sort of Christian

um but it's it's the full moon the new moon and the Half Moon days so there's four per lunar month

and who would I as a monk do on impulsatel well

um according to the Buddhist monastic

code

on the full moon days and the new moon
days all the monks have to meet together
in the congregation hall or whatever
they have that's rough equivalent to a
congregational inside the same
ecclesiastical boundary

and do an imposita ceremony and if
you're just by yourself living out in
the woods do you posted the ceremony
means

you uncover your

your shoulder you squat down and you say
ajame upulsateau three times which just
means today is my upholster Tom and if
you don't do that that's against the

rules

you've committed a Duke of fence which is a minor offense you can expiate it through uh confession if there's two or three monks

pretty sure it's two or three yeah two or three monks then there's this short short little ceremonies it's longer than ajame uposito but it takes just a few minutes but if there's four or more monks that's a Sangha it takes at least four monks to make a Sangha and

um then you have to recite the padimoka and that was my duty at some of the monasteries I lived at at some of the monasters I was the only monk who had memorized by heart the entire viku

parimoka and so

um my mouth doesn't move very fast some
some Burmese monks they just rattle
through it it's just just boom it's like
an auction here reciting the parimoka
rules and they can be done in like 20
minutes but for me it would take if I
was doing it really fast for me it would
take at least 35 minutes to get through
the ceremony and you all you have to
squat you know everyone's like in the
squatting position you know making
Anjali with their hands and during hot
weather in Burma I mean I'd have like
these two puddles of sweat like one
underneath each uh elbow while squatting

like this by the time we were done and
sometimes your legs can just be in agony
if you have to squat for a long time
that's one of the self-torturers the
jeans used to do is just squat for a
long time

but on the the eight day the half the
half moon days we didn't have to do
anything in particular the uh I stayed
at one big school Monastery where the
novices all had to go on the half moon
days and the full and New Moon days and
then we take their their precepts but
the monks didn't have to do that
um and with regard to the second part of
this question do I think the moon has an
impact on our meditation and mindfulness

and our energy level maybe a really
subtle one but I haven't really noticed
it consciously

so I'll just move on to johannes's next
question

why can Sadiq be translated as
mindfulness and memory it seems like
these are two different states of mind
or phenomena I would say mindfulness is
directing your mind to a certain
phenomena while memories come in at
random almost like a sense contact

thank you for your answers

um yeah I used to think about this too
why is it that being in the present
moment has the same word as remembering

something in the past that you're not supposed to do when you're being mindful or at least I mean you can remember the password you're being mindful so long as you are

like in the present moment observing yourself remembering something in the past which is a little bit tricky

um so it did seem strange to me how did they come up with the same word uh Sadiq literally means like memory

how did memory come to mean

um not thinking of a past at all but just being in the present moment

and I was kind of surprised when I read Saint in Saint John of the cross's works that for a Catholic contemplative the

word for mindfulness that they use for
their own just being in the present
moment and not thinking anything more
than you need to think just being right
here right now you know be here now
that's called recollection which also
means memory how it came to be that both
uh Catholic uh contemplative monastic
orders and terravonna Buddhism words
Buddhism in general came to use the same
word for memory as mindfulness so I
really don't know the answer to that but
I guess you could say that both what
they have in common is just presence of
mind

but I mean a lot of the time memory is I

mean it's a conscious effort you're trying to remember a name or something then I mean you're you're deliberately trying to remember it but um it is a good question and I really don't have the the answer of why it's the same not only in Buddhism but in in like Roman Catholicism also

so I'll just move on to johannes's next question

let's check in the time here okay so johannes's next question is can the word Kaya be equaled with our contact on an experiential level how do we know that we have a body we only experience it as a sense contact so can Kaya Sadiq be equated with the mindfulness of the

feelings of the body I'm also wondering what is the actual difference between samaditi and samasati so I guess this is another question Samad DT is defined as knowing feeling as feeling contact is contact Etc but wouldn't this be equated with what most people say is Right mindfulness if I remember correctly right mindfulness includes mindfulness of the Anita or the impermanence aspect of these phenomena is that maybe the difference okay well the first part about the meaning of Kaya Kaya literally means body or you can use it as mass but usually it does mean body and how do we know at the experiential level that we

have a body is indirectly we have to
infer the existence of physical matter
because all we can really know directly
is mind or mental States

so

in terrible Buddhism they just assumed
that physical matter is ultimately real
and in abidama especially you know
physical matter is one of the four
ultimate realities along with
mind mental states and nibana

so

um

yeah we do only experience it indirectly
I mean we do there really is no proof
that physical matter even exists which I
think uh Emmanuel Kant called the Great

Scandal of philosophy

which is also it kind of

it's it's a good argument against some
scientists or scientific atheists

especially who insist that that matter

is the the one thing that we can know

and really it's our own mental States

it's like subjectivity is the only thing

we really know and different

philosophers and different people have

dealt with that issue differently

so let's see

so can Kaya City or mindfulness of the

body be equated with the mindfulness of

the feelings of the body yeah that's

that's something that I've I've been

going with for a long time like

um like if you're doing anapana you're not really being mindful of the air and going in and out of your nose you're being mindful

um if you're doing it well of just the sensation of touch so yeah I never had any use for mindfulness of the body even though it's one of the four Sunny patanas because you can't really know the body except through mind so it's still a kind of mindfulness of of like cheetah nupasana or waiting on upasana which is mindfulness of your own mind or mindfulness of of feelings

yeah so I agree with that it is it's I don't know if you could call it sloppy

thinking or what but yeah it does seem to be kind of a a potential glitch in the system

so then I'll just move on to the second part here

the second half of this question I'm also wondering what is the actual difference between some Oddity and Samosa D samaditi is defined as knowing feeling is feeling contact is contact Etc but that's I mean there might be a sutta or two that explain it that way which would be like advanced practice but some Oddity or right view is step one on the Eightfold Path and so for most people you know

especially lay people people that really
are not experienced meditators or like
renunciants

um Right View is is like you know there
is karma you know that that there is
morality and immorality right and wrong
that you have certain moral duties like
supporting your parents and that sort of
thing that would be right view just
um just like understanding or at least
believing the Four Noble Truths
that is it would be considered Right
View

um at the the elementary level
so it's just it's sort of like the road
map just sort of knowing the road map
to to practice you know it's like step

one

and this uh in the in the in the scene

there's only the scene and the heard

there's only the herd kind of a stuff

that's very advanced practice and that

would be more properly known as as

mindfulness

or even concentration if you get really

Advanced on it

so

yeah so that would be the difference I

don't there might be a sutta that is

saying right view is this advanced level

you know being in the present moment not

interpreting you know having a running

commentary and that sort of thing but

for most people you know right of you it just has you know the basics of Buddhist philosophy including the four noble truths and so forth

so I'll just move on to johannes's next question

and he says one of the wrong livelihoods is abstaining from Trading with meat wouldn't this also include sustaining your life force by buying meat I think technically it's a wrong livelihood is trading in animals for Slaughter once it's already dead I don't think it's necessarily wrong livelihood although um most butchers are also the guys that sell meat I mean traditionally it's just modern times that you have supermarkets

where the guy is selling you the meat
isn't the guy that killed the pig the
day before

so

uh technically I don't think that just
selling meat is wrong livelihood if it's
already if it's been killed by somebody
else you're not like paying the person
to kill the animal it's just being
shipped you in a truck or something then
uh you'd be it'd be more wrong
livelihood to sell uh mouse traps or
cans of insecticide or beer because then
you're selling intoxicants or you're
selling you know like poisons and that
sort of thing

and uh

wrong livelihood yeah it wouldn't it
wouldn't be wrong livelihood to buy me
because buying something isn't a
livelihood unless you're a professional
buyer for somebody

so that would be something entirely
different and mainly I mean there's so
many people in the west including
Western Buddhists that are just locked
into this Western utilitarian ethic
where they don't realize that Buddhist
ethics are subjective it's a matter of
your own mental States and so they're
they're saying oh it's it's immoral to
buy me because then you're you know it's
like voting in favor of killing and so

forth but they're taking it

I mean they're taking it outside of
themselves you know something out there
is making it immoral

but really it's your own mental States
so technically if eating meat or buying
meat is making bad karma for you it's
because of your own like guilt and these
feelings of I'm doing something wrong
this is bad I shouldn't be doing this
but I'm doing it anyway

so I mean just buying meat or eating
meat ultimately is it's morally neutral
especially if you didn't kill the animal
yourself you didn't have somebody else
kill it for you you know you know it

wasn't killed for your sake like monks
are allowed to eat meat terrible
Buddhist monks the ancient Indian
scriptures you know the Buddha himself
ate me if you read the poly texts and I
mean a monk isn't allowed to ask for
like fancy like good food English
includes me unless he's sick or unless
someone has already given him permission
in advance that he can ask for it if he
wants it

so

yeah the whole issue of eating meat I
mean there's other things too paying
taxes or or voting for corrupt
politicians or something I mean it
depends on your own mental state whether

it's moral or immoral and two people can do exactly the same action and it's moral for one person and immoral for the other you know one example that I give um I've given probably a few times at least in these q and A's you're walking through the forest you hear a frog squealing you walk over and see what it is there's a snake trying to eat this frog so you take a stick or something and you chase the snake away you save the Frog so it's not moral or immoral well if you do it out of compassion for the Frog it's you've made good karma if you do it out of aversion for the snake then it's bad karma if you do it for a

mixture of both and it's a mixture of
Good and Bad Karma or wholesome and
unwholesome skillful or unskillful Karma
so I mean you can do the exact same
action of chasing the snake away from
the frog or or chasing the cat away from
the bird or whatever and it depends on
what your motive is that determines
whether it's
skillful or unskillable whether you're
making good karma or Bad Karma and that
is similar to eating meat
so I'll just move on to johannes's next
question
how do you explain discriminating linear
rules it seems like not allowing
hermaphrodites to ordain as a monk

doesn't really make sense in regard to practice why should someone not be able to develop their mind and heart only because of bodily features well obviously you can't ordain a woman as a monk because a woman would be a nun in in order to be a monk you have to be male in fact you have to be an intact male castrated male cannot be a monk so partly I mean if you read the Vinnie attacks it explains why they did not allow

um pandakas which were mostly units hermaphrodites are very rare and there might be somewhat different reasons but a eunuch in Ancient India

one of the main reasons why they were made eunuchs is for sexual purpose they were like a man have sex with the eunuch was like an alternative to a woman sort of like the ancient Romans having sex with boys you know it was sort of like it was like an alternative to having sex with a woman you know just kind of a little bit of variety or something um with regard to hermaphrodites I mean it could be a slightly different reason than that because I mean the units getting back to the Unix though I mean they were largely castrated for sexual purposes they were used as prostitutes and so forth and they had a reputation for being sexually promiscuous like like

flagrantly gay men

um it's it's a stereotype not all gay

men are homosexual men are

um sexually promiscuous or just like

licentious unrestrained in their sexual

impulses but I mean you read medical

guides you read medical manuals and it's

not uncommon for a homosexual man to

have had sex with more than 100 or 1 000

other men I read that in a medical guy

I've read it elsewhere too it's not all

that uncommon for a gay man to have had

more than 1 000 sexual partners

so I mean one of the reasons why

you know they're trying to weed out that

sort of thing you know just prevent them

from being ordained it's just to to
avoid the likelihood of scandals and so
forth but with regard to hermaphrodites
I mean they would be scary I mean
ancient India pre-modern cultures
they're superstitious and like people
that are way out of the ordinary it it
makes people feel
uneasy to say the least or they could be
like completely frightened and so there
are rules against people with Leprosy
being ordained albinos people that are
just have any kind of really strange
physical abnormality are not allowed to
be ordained as monks or at least they're
not supposed to be just because there's
the reputation of the Sangha they didn't

want

the Sangha to get you know to scare
people to have like get a bad reputation
for these you know freaks or whatever
that are being ordained

so it could be that too I mean

hermaphrodite

um I mean they can be kind of especially
to a simple villager in a pre-modern
culture it's like uh

so I mean apparently Johannes here is
using modern or post-modern liberal
ethics you know diversity and inclusion
and all that as uh and just sort of
transplanting it back into ancient India
and applying modern or post-modern

ethical standards to ancient India and
uh

I don't think it really works that way
so I'll just move on to johannes's next
question

reading the suit as I often stumble upon
the instructions imagining light but
there's not really any elaboration in
the text as far as I know is this may be
regarding nimitas or light Casino also I
remember attacks that Anu panason
is apparently part of the Wind Casino
practice

this and another text in the suitos
where I read that one should imagine the
casino completely around oneself makes
it seem quite different from the wisudi

Maga style Casino practice do you think it's possible that casino got misinterpreted over the centuries and was practiced way differently in the times of the Buddha I don't really understand why Casino should be useful for developing right mindfulness and then it's just about focusing on something that why use these objects for it and not for example a tree or my hand well I think uh like the wisudi manga gives detailed explanations or like instructions for Casino meditation and I think for the sake of just standardizing and you know classifying everything they've just got 10 casinos and

um it I mean it wasn't necessarily that
way in the Buddhist time in a casino for
the most part is just a disc and you
focus you just meditate on this disc
it's essentially like a hypnotic disc
and I'm going to to get up and close the
door in a second
okay

so uh yeah I think Casino was more
Loosely interpreted in early times is
just meditating on you know something
more or less disc shaped even light
Casino like one way of doing a light
casinos

um there's like the well I mean that
would be fire Casino I guess one one way
of doing light because you know is a

monk would actually cut a circular hole
in the wall of his Hut and the light
shining through that would be like a
bright light I mean now you could use
just a circular light I guess and it is
interesting that um
at Stanford University in California
they've got a hypnosis lab there and the
standard method they they're trying to
be scientific of course so they're using
a standardized hypnotic method you know
they try to use the same method to
hypnotize many different subjects and
it's looking at a small circle
that's that's their hypnotic subject so
um it may be that by the time the wisudi

manga was composed there was a certain
amount of confusion between
um deep meditative States and just
self-hypnosis

and um Imagining the casino completely
around yourself there's there's some of
that reminiscent in the usurimaga where
after you've been meditating on this
circle this disc of some color or or
fire one of the four elements are the
water Wind Fire whatever

um I mean how you have a circle of wind
I don't know but

um once you you've mastered it well
enough that even with your eyes closed
you still see it you know you're sort of
getting into a hypnotic stage I guess

then you start manipulating making it
bigger and smaller and that sort of
thing and uh I guess if you make it big
enough you can just be like filling you
know the area including you
but um yeah it's
probably in the Buddhist time assuming
that he did teach
ing
of some sort it was probably more vague
more wide open you're just you're like
focusing on some sort of object
um like like external like a visual
object or something
so there's a story where
um

no sorry puto

who was the Buddha's You Know Chief

disciple you know his right hand man uh

had a disciple and um the disciple just

wasn't responding sorry puto was you

know giving him different meditation

objects and so forth and the student

just wasn't doing very well so he went

to the Buddha and the Buddha just gave

him a red flower and just said meditate

on this and because the Buddha could see

into a person and know where they were

stuck and know how best to help them

that it was just for some reason due to

his temperament or his character or

whatever reason you're meditating on

this red flower just worked and you

became enlightened

eventually

so that might qualify as a casino I'm

back in the Buddhist time before it got

standardized into these discs

and just tan a variety of ten

but um

yeah it's it's a matter of debate I

suppose it's hard to say exactly what

was actually the case in the Buddhist

time and I've spent years and years

doing my best to understand you know

what what uh Domo was like in the

Buddhist time but to some degree he's

can't know for sure

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from here where the

Wake error word hereward the wake

I have a question which relates to your
interview with auto Excelsior on hegel's
phenomenology of spirit when you talked
briefly of Kant during that interview
you mentioned that Kant thought that one
could not know anything beyond the
contents of one's own mind

this sounds very much like solipsism but
is it redeemed through the kantian moral
imperative

I.E Khan's ethics not necessarily as far
as I understand it

um the only thing that saved caught from
solipsism was his belief that there
really is a thing in itself out there

even though we can't know it but his
successors I mean he was like the
founder of German idealism and his
successors kind of realized like Hegel
for example realized that I mean if you
can't really know the thing in itself
why even insist that it exists why
assert its existence so they just did
away with it and they became idealists
it's all just a manifestation of mind
and uh I mean it's not just the German
idealists some schools of Buddhism like
um yoga Chara which is a one of the main
branches of Mahayana
they're essentially slipsists they're
saying that everything you experience is

just uh a creation of your own mind
through the power of your own Karma
so

yeah I think just uh he knew that you
could not prove the existence of
physical matter but nevertheless he did
believe that there was something out
there that was real you know the thing
in itself that was causing us to see you
know the thing as it seems but his
successors are many of his successors in
in German philosophy including
schopenhauer too just realized that the
whole

Ultimate Reality of the thing in itself
out there somewhere was just Superfluous
because I mean I mean it was just

unnecessary

at least philosophically or logically

so we'll just move on to the next

question this is from rui

and rui says hello Ponyo do you think

that translating dharmatex for a modest

living can be considered right

livelihood yeah sure I mean as long as

you're not ripping anybody off or

anything then uh yeah yeah that can be

right livelihood and you're not I mean

you're not causing harm to anybody

you're actually helping people

so yeah that was an easy question

uh as long as you just be careful that

you're translating well you don't want

to mess up the Dharma by making bad
translations and I won't name any names
but there are some bad translators out
there

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from edible advice

Voyager a little like Voyager

I'm not sure I'm not sure how to
pronounce these names

anyway Edelweiss says are you familiar
with the book radical Dharma it is
written by a black lesbian and black
queer man that claims the title of llama
llama it preaches Liberation theology
and interprets dependent co-arising as
the same thing as communist
intersexuality it would be nice to see a

video responding to this if you have not already yeah I've never heard of it but it doesn't surprise me I mean there's just a strong thread or or current of this kind of thing in Western Buddhism especially associated with Academia and just sort of California in general I think

um yeah to interpret dependent core Rising as the same thing as communist intersexuality you know third wave feminism or something I mean that's just [_] I mean it's just insanity but they don't care because truth is just a cultural construct and you can just create your own truth and then once you

gain power you know socially politically
then you just impose your truth on
others

because if they don't accept your truth
then they're fascists or Nazis or hate
speech mongers or something

but yeah yeah there's lots of this I
mean I get exposed to it quite a lot and
uh if I were to do some kind of video on
something like this I'd probably do
something that's not an entire book that
I have to read I wouldn't want to read
an entire book of this stuff you can
just find like academic articles on the
same kind of stuff
but uh

yeah Liberation theology I've come

across that term in like uh just really
far leftist

um just post-modern attempts to just
redefine Buddhism because of course it's
all

a social construct anyway

so I think I'll just move on to the next
question this is from mahabodhi Templar
who goes by a multitude of names this is
his most recent I think

and mahabodhi Templar says are because
allowed to hold government office does
it make a difference if the position is
elected like a president or dog catcher
or hereditary like a king or mucking

Monk

um I think beakers are allowed to hold a government office of like advisor to the king I'm sure there have been bakus who are advisors who weren't getting paid because I mean it's against the rules of monastic discipline for a monk to accept money or even any kind of payment for services rendered you know he's not even allowed to barter really unless

um the terms are dictated by somebody else I mean there's these loopholes that a monk can do but um

yeah I think that would be about the extent I mean maybe uh like in Sri Lanka you've got monks that are University professors and probably like a

government-run university you know it'd
be government funded anyway

um and so long as they're not getting
paid for it which most of them are
pretty sure

um I mean I don't think there'd be
necessarily anything wrong with that at
least there wouldn't be anything against
the rules although of course the Miku
should be sitting at the root of a tree
meditating he should be striving for
enlightenment that's the job of a monk
is to you know cultivate wisdom and try
to become enlightened In This Very life
you know if possible
so getting involved in you know

government service and so forth is uh
probably not Optimum for a monk but so
long as he's doing something dharmic you
know like an advisor

um and not getting paid for it then I
don't think it would be against the
rules and I don't think it really
matters if it's uh elected or or
hereditary

so we'll just move on to the next
question this is from librarian crazy
and librarian crazy says

I've always had conviction in Buddha
dhamma but there is two things I'm
having doubt about one is why is in the
suta all past historical Buddhas always
born in India I feel like it's weird how

there are so many Buddhas but they
always seem to be born in 500 BC Indian
culture

and two in digonikaya 26 Chaka Valley
chakawati suta Buddha mentioned some
past civilization where people live up
to

50 000 years old I found this Odd as we
have no evidence of this at all

um okay there's another part here but I
think that's a different question so I
would just say the librarian crazy first
of all I mean with regard to this first
part why are all past historical Buddhas
born into Iron Age Ganges Valley Indian
culture

um

I don't think that the Buddha was teaching about past Buddhas now I think that was a sort of devotional like a Mythos that arose after the Buddhist Time by people who only knew Indian culture

you know it's like India at that time for the people in India in the Buddhist time it was a continent of Jambu Deepa and

um they were you had the Himalayan Mountains to the north there might have been I mean they had to acknowledge that there was some kind of inhabited lands farther west like Persia but that was all part of Jambu Depot according to

them there were some other islands and
then to the far north and they're
they're and to the Far East and Far West
there were these different continents
that I'm pretty sure were not inhabited
by humans they were inhabited by
um like yakas and or nagas or something
I don't I mean I've never had much
interest in this kind of thing
but that's really all they knew it's
just the limitations of their
imagination
that's I mean this they could not
imagine
um like modern Western culture
or or even ancient Roman culture they

all they knew was India and so they just had this cycle this eternal cycle of one India after another after another after another and it never got modern or anything it was just you know essentially the same culture they were in that didn't really change very fast I mean India of 500 years ago wasn't all that much different from India of 700 years ago or 300 years ago I mean most of it was pretty much the same there were some changes but um yeah it was it was fairly stable and they just assumed that's just the way it was so yeah I mean it was just the limitations

it's I've talked about this before like
you know just I think the the video I
did before this one I was talking about
um just like why the gods seem to have
human intelligence I mean there's no
like Gods with intelligence just vastly
beyond ours with regard to like IQ and
reasoning capacity and so forth they'll
have like powers where they can do
things and they can might see a thousand
worlds simultaneously but once they
start talking they're talking like a
person of more or less average
intelligence

so I mean that also is just the people
who are coming up with the myth they've

got the limitations of their own
imagination what they're capable of of
imagining and that's just the way it
turned out I really
um anyone who's seen a number of my
videos knows that I do not consider
everything in the depictica to be 100
accurate historical documents
that probably more than half of it was
kind of like conceived later on after
the Buddhist time and not always even by
monks who are particularly enlightened
so with regard to the second part here
Indigo nikaya 26 the chakawadisuta
Buddha mentioned some past civilization
where people lived up to 50 000 years
old I found this Odd as we have no

evidence of this at all yeah well I don't think there is any evidence of it and I'm rather skeptical that there has ever been a civilization on this planet of human beings living up to 50 000 years is just that according to Buddhist cosmology we don't evolve up from pond slime you know up through worms and and fish and amphibians and reptiles and lower mammals and monkeys and apes and humans which is what science teaches nowadays mostly you know good old Charles Darwin that um Buddhist cosmology has us coming downwards we're degenerating from from god-like beings

and uh I do have a degree in biology and
I do think that there's a lot of good
evidence supporting Charles Darwin's
point of view I mean in general outline
I mean it's pretty obvious that
Evolution has occurred regardless of how
it actually happens
but uh yeah and there really isn't very
little I mean maybe somebody like Graham
Hancock could someone come up with some
kind of evidence that would not be
accepted by you know the consensus of
the scientific community that there was
some past civilization where people were
god-like and lived 50 000 years
so this also it's just it's in the
ancient Indian mythology that gets

incorporated into the texts and I don't think the Buddha himself was teaching it unless he was just going along with his culture and just repeating what was already you know circling around you know circulating

but I do think it was probably

um not it did not originate with go to

My Buddha himself

even though it's coming out of his mouth in the pseudo but

I mean you can find all kinds of things coming out of the mouths of all kinds of religious Founders that they never said except for maybe Islam because it's that's pretty relatively recent and kind

of reliable that probably almost all of
that was channeled through Muhammad
if you don't mind me saying it the Quran
was channeled

okay so I'll just move on to librarian
crazy's next question here

also how do monks deal with lust and
annoyance towards insects like
mosquitoes and flies I think lustful
desire and insects might be the biggest
problem for me if I ever became a monk
especially an ascetic monk yeah I mean
lust and insects they were troubles for
me too in fact um

for a long time I would not slap a
mosquito or anything like that and then
I started trying ironically when I was

trying to just go full blast and just
living out in the woods I was living
under this rock ledge at the edge of a
national park in Burma
and it wasn't just mosquitoes including
anopheles mosquitoes because I got
malaria there every time I went there
um it was like these they were like sand
flies or something that I mean they hurt
and they come in swarms and I mean I
just could not sit there and let myself
get bitten by a Sandfly or like a horse
fly
I just cannot sit there and put up with
it
so I eventually started smashing the

little bastards but I I try to
compensate I mean I knew it wasn't just
it wasn't good you know but I mean
everyone has their limits and just
sitting there being eaten alive by these
you know blood-sucking or blood licking
flies because I think a horse fly they
just slice your skin and then when the
blood comes up they start licking it
I don't think they actually suck at
least not in a literal sense
so I'm trying to make up for a little
bit by feeding antlions if I'd smash one
of these sand flies
that they were they were just awful too
that I would at least put it into one of
these little ant lion pits and feed a

hungry antlion larva so at least I'd get
a little bit of Merit in addition to the
demerit of squishing a fly but again I
don't consider flies I mean this is this
isn't Buddhism this is more biology I
don't think insects really feel pain
that they're sort of like little
Terminators or something
and last I mean that's
mainly you just have to be
um mindful
and you just have to have this kind of
reflex of no not appropriate not going
there no
and uh you have to have really strong
faith and very very strong commitment

and determination to really succeed with
that unless you just have a weak libido
so yeah I mean you just have to
cultivate self-restraint and patience
like a monk has to be he has to be like
patient not only with the abiding
insects and the lust but also hunger and
thirst and heat and cold and sickness
and you know whatever the universe
throws at you if you're a good monk
especially a wise one you just accept it
like a stoic maybe even better than the
stoic so it takes self-discipline and
meditation helps mindfulness practice
helps and at least you can make you can
make um progress in that direction
although it may be that you'll never

stop being lustful until maybe you're 70
or 80.

and uh it may be that you'll never be
able to just sit there and be bitten by
horseflies that uh you'll eventually
just get under a mosquito net or move to
some place where you've got like walls
and a roof and stuff that'll it'll
protect you
that will shelter you from the little
parasitic bastards

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Rick

and we've been up to almost two hours
yeah I might have to start doing these
once a week

Rick says can you elaborate on traveling
as a monk do you have to ask permission
from anyone how do you go about
traveling to different monasteries
wandering around the cities or forests
navigating modern world with no money do
you have to be a monk for a certain
amount of time before you can travel
well that's kind of an interesting
question

with regard to asking permission there's
a a rule in the padimoka on pachidia
rule saying that if you're going to
enter you're going to go out into public
afternoon like in the morning you can
just walk into the village and go for
alms without asking permission but if

you're going to go after

the morning you know like in the

afternoon or the evening or whatever you

have to go to another Monk at the

monastery and say

which means

um I asked permission to go into the

village at the wrong time which is you

know after in the morning almost around

time

but aside from that I mean if especially

if you're not living Independence on a

teacher which is generally after five

five years or five rainy seasons then I

mean you're pretty much a free agent and

can go where you like

and if you're living alone you don't
have anyone to ask you don't have to ask
so how do you go about traveling to
different monasteries it depends I mean
um walking in the tropics for a
Westerner doesn't work so good that's
the way it was pretty much always done
in ancient times ancient India you just
walked
the Buddha himself just walked all over
the Ganges Valley
and then you might get in a boat across
a river or something like a ferry or
something
but I mean there's cars I mean if you
need a ticket usually a generous
layperson will donate a ticket somewhere

whether a bus ticket or a plane ticket
or whatever

uh wandering around cities yeah you
generally want a temple or something
I've never really saw monks sleeping on
sidewalks like homeless people in San
Francisco or you know any number of
other cities in the USA nowadays
um navigating the modern world with no
money I did it I mean it is possible I
can tell you that from experience
um sometimes it was dicey like
especially I got trapped in Bali in
Indonesia a couple times at the airport
because you uh an American citizen
doesn't need uh a visa to to get into

the country but you have to buy one at the airport for 30 bucks and I didn't have money and you can't have the the supporters come into that area to pay for your Visa

um just because I mean you haven't gone through customs and stuff yet you have to get the visa first then go through customs and then you can meet the people waiting to pick you up and I got trapped that way twice and it was I mean it was nerve-wracking or one time I'm at this airport I give them my ticket paper you know it's not like a real ticket anymore it's just like this computer printout thing and you know the nice little Asian lady it types in the number into the

computer and frowns and types it in
again and then she calls over the
manager

and and says something in a language I
don't understand and he types it in and
they're all frowning and saying stuff I
don't understand oh man I'm in trouble
and uh it turned out that the ticket was
reserved and everything it's just for
some reason it never got activated so I
had to call the the travel agent lady to
act to like call them and tell them that
I mean it's been paid for and everything
so that kind of thing can happen and you
may have to fast if nobody's going to
offer you a meal

um

but I mean it can't be done and I've
done it lots of times I've traveled lots
of places with with zero money but I
mean generally you have to have someone
who's waiting to pick you up

um I mean in America it is more
difficult I've had to sleep on a bench
in Seattle one night just because there
was like this layover at the train
station you can't sleep at the train
station they close it and so I'm just
sitting on a bench all night just being
the drizzle

it was it was not good

but I mean I survived obviously

so I said you have to be a mom for a

certain amount of time before you travel
not really as long as you get permission
from your teacher if you have a teacher
so I'll just move on to Rick's next
question can you describe your
experience of wearing the robes Comfort
practicality sleeping Etc
well

they're fairly comfortable I mean if
you're just wearing a lower robe you're
free balling it which is uh comfortable
um practicality not so much because I
mean the Burmese monks they know how to
like tie their upper robe around
themselves in a certain way like a vest
they use like their their waistband to

hold it in place and then they can do
work but Monk's robes simply were not
designed to do physical work I mean I'd
be trying to just sweep the sweet leaves
with the bamboo broom and I just have to
go shirtless I just go bare chested
inside the monster it's okay anyway just
because the road would just keep
slipping off and just getting loose and
it was just a it was just a pain
sleeping yeah I would just take it off I
mean you might sleep with a low rope you
might use your upper robe as as a sheet
and just cover yourself like a blanket
or something so that's no problem but
you get used to it I mean you get used
to anything it's like going up and down

ladders when you've got like this long skirt thing you know there are certain things you have to learn like one of the first things a monk has to learn like a western monk who's not used to wearing monks rubs I mean before you learn how to meditate before you learn how to to uh follow the rules of discipline you have to learn how to sit down without exposing yourself

that's that's important

but I mean after a while you get used to it it's no problem so we'll just move on to Rick's next question

how does a monk get things like sandals or dental floss well if you're living in

a monastery that has extra sandals you
can get one there

um generally I mean even in the ancient
rules of monastic discipline you know
there's like the store keeper for the
monaster it has his duties and if needs
sandals you give him sandals if you've
got sandals you know extra sandals in
the storeroom

um but aside from that as a general rule
if you're living in a Buddhist culture
or you're living with supporters monks
have to live around supporters you can't
just go solo as a monk you have to live
you know Independence on laypeople
and so

um if you've got a lay person who has

told you you know I'll support you if
you need something let me know venerable
sir and you say I need some sandals or I
need some dental floss and then they
donate it to you and then they get Merit
and they're happy and if they give you
what you wanted you the monk tends to be
happy too although as a monk especially
if you're living in Asia or something
you just have to get used to not getting
what you ask for you know you ask for
one thing you get something entirely
different you don't complain about it
you know you don't chew them out for
giving you the wrong thing I mean just
swallow it you know okay thank you are

you you're not even supposed to thank
people

because they're not doing it for thanks
they're doing it for merit

in Thailand especially I've heard that
uh people can actually get upset if a
western Monk Is naively thanks them for
for giving them something because again
they're not doing it for thanks they're
they're not wanting their reward in this
life they want the reward in the next
life

so

next question from Rick

there are Buddhists who don't meditate
and meditators who are not Buddhists can
you talk about the role and importance

of meditation in Buddhism well that's
like a huge topic

and uh I'm gonna have to sort of skim
over the surface of this one a little
bit

but um the role and importance of
meditation in Buddhism well in Buddhism
it is assumed that you become
enlightened through meditation

um I mean it might just be through just
being mindful of every moment while
you're moving around during the daytime
that counts as meditation too it's
mindfulness practice Sati patana

but I mean the Buddha became enlightened
through meditation he taught meditation

encouraged others to meditate samasamati
is the eighth step in the noble
Eightfold Path you know right
concentration sometimes translated as
right meditation
right mindfulness is also in there right
effort which is like you know the which
includes meditative effort
so
yeah there are uh meditators who are not
in Buddhists although a lot of them
might be practicing
um I mean some of them might be
practicing valid meditation techniques I
hope most of them others might just be
like hypnotizing themselves and thinking
that they're retaining something because

they're seeing all this wild interesting
stuff and thinking they're really
getting something when it's like
subconscious you know self

um

so like Auto suggestion or something in
a vivid imagination

so can I talk about the role and
importance of meditation in Buddhism

well yeah I mean it's part of the

Eightfold Path I mean first you need

Selah I mean this is this is like the
sort of the Holy Trinity

so first you have Morality In which sort
of calms the mind it sets the the ground
it calms your mind enough that then you

can take it in the next step and just
like completely getting a flat calm
going with your mind which is samadhi so
Sila is morality leads to a blameless
simple life Peace of Mind relatively
speaking and then somebody comes next
which is concentration and according to
Orthodox taravala you can't have pure
purity of mind without having purity of
morals first I'm not so sure about that
but that's what they say and then
finally if you've got purity of of
computer mind which at the highest level
would be fourth genre which is a very
Advanced meditative State then you have
purity of wisdom which is enlightenment
so there are some sutos that actually

suggest even if they don't just flat out
just blurt it out that fourth genre you
know the highest genre level you know
like as high as you can go through
meditation at least in the older older
sutras that that's like the jumping off
point to nibana and in fact Gianna is
called like temporary liberation

um

it may be that some people like Ramana
maharshi or

Eckhart Tolle

um became enlightened without meditating
but a Buddhist would say well they had
part of me they meditated a lot in a
previous life and I don't think either

one of them would have denied that
that they meditated a lot in a previous
life until they just got right to the
point where they were just really ripe
you know like the the yellow leaf
getting ready to fall off the tree you
know it took was just a little nudge and
that was it

so yeah meditation is considered to be
essential for enlightenment in Buddhism
it's not essential to be a Buddhist
because you can just be a lay person who
keeps five precepts and supports your
your aging parents and takes good care
of your family and you know has right
livelihood you make an honest living and
you you love your neighbor you tell the

truth and you don't steal and all that
that's I mean you're doing good
but if you want full Enlightenment
according to terrible to Buddhism then
you're you're gonna have to meditate and
uh

I mean if you somehow manage it without
meditating it's because you meditated at
a hell of a lot in a previous existence
so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Mary spelled
m-e-r-r-y who briefly was known as Brave
sir Robin but now has gone back to Mary
again

and Mary says is Tibetan Buddhism really
Buddhism or some sort of shamanism with

Buddhist elements I have my opinion on
this

um

it's it's a combination of I mean you
can look at it either way I mean does
the cup have full or half empty I mean

is is Tibetan Buddhism Buddhism with
lots of shamanism added or is it

Shamanism with lots of Buddhism added

um yeah I I I'm willing to be generous
and call it a kind of Buddhism but it's
not pure ancient Orthodox Indian

Buddhism

it's it was some sort of

um I mean there's a lot of majamika in

it I think the galupa that the Dalai

Lama follows was looks back to nagarjuna

you know I think presumably the founder
of the the majama school of Mahayana
Buddhism as sort of their spiritual
father you know like the first patriarch
in their lineage or something
um and then but when so you had and then
that it sort of evolved into it adopted
a lot of weird tantric elements it was
getting very esoteric you know all kinds
of weird stuff was being added even
before it got to Tibet
and then when it got to Tibet there was
already the bone or like a shamanistic
um religious system or spiritual system
or just shamanistic system going there
and of course when Buddhism goes to any

culture it's going to adopt you know
elements of that culture it's just
invariable it's just it's going to
happen in any culture

so I mean if you if you're generous I
mean you want to call it Buddhism I mean
most people do Tibetan Buddhism
so yeah it's it's definitely got
Buddhist elements I mean you want to
call it is it more than 50 Buddhism is
it only 49 Buddhism I would say it's
probably

um more than 50 percent Buddhism as as
like an Indian import

but I mean the Buddhism that was
imported in into Tibet from India was
already very just a lot of it was this

esoteric tantric kind of stuff
um before it even got to Tibet
so if you want to be a hard ass you know
you don't want to accept even Mahayana
as real Buddhism you know or or pure
land or something then it's just a
matter of opinion I think I don't think
there's any just litmus test to tell for
sure just objectively whether something
really is Buddhism or not
I think I remember reading a long time
ago that there was uh some American
Buddhist Congress convention back in
like the the late 80s and they were
trying to determine what is a Buddhist
you know and they couldn't agree that

the best they could come up with is a
Buddhist is anyone who considers
themselves to be a Buddhist of course
this was in the west where
you've got a lot of uh lefties who are
just sort of relativists anyway
so yeah it's just a matter of opinion so
I'll just move on to uh Mary's next
question

and by golly I get caught by surprise by
these this is the very last question
this is the last of all the questions I
thought I was only like two-thirds of
the way through I'm thinking man it's
gonna be three hours long
boom

very last question here

background story of mahavira the founder of Jainism is almost identical as that of the Buddha he was a prince he left his Palace and family around the age of 30. he wandered as an ascetic for many years and then he became enlightened and found a unique way of life and way to Nirvana and for the next 30 years he did teach this way question could Buddha's story have been just copied from that of mahavira because Jainism is earlier well that's that's an interesting question and yeah I have I have read some old Jane scriptures old Jane sutras or sutras it's the the

Jane's texts are in a kind of paw crit
that isn't Sanskrit and it's not poly so
I can't remember if it's suta or Sutra
but um

yeah the the biography the sort of
Legend of mahavira it's almost the same
as that of godama Buddha except he
didn't cut off his his hair and beard he
actually ripped them out by the roots I
think it was eight handfuls or just a
certain like magical number of handfuls
that he ripped out all of his head in
and facial hair but I think it's more
likely to be the other way around where
the Jane's copied the Buddhists in this
otherwise it's some sort of archetype
that just through this weird coincidence

mahavira the founder of the Jainism and go
to My Buddha the founder of Buddhism
just I mean they both had essentially
the same kind of of Life leading up to
their renunciation and there's a lot of
the same actions even when they were
striving towards Enlightenment because
you read the Buddhist text the Buddha
himself was like a hardcore ascetic
you know who just he went mute in there
he'd go around naked you know he'd eat
cow poop and stuff he'd just all these
things that mahavira also presumably did
and so it's just it does seem

um

kind of suspicious that both of them

would live essentially the same life up
until they become enlightened
and I do think that it's more likely
that the Jains copied from the
Buddhists because
the Jains were such ascetics they didn't
have many scholars and they lost their
scriptures twice
that there were just the monks were so
much into just going out in the forest
and torturing themselves or whatever
wandering around naked smearing
themselves of mud to keep from freezing
to death in the winter time that I mean
they just didn't have like uh schools
like like the Buddhists had they were
they were too ascetic for that and so

they would just they didn't have their scriptures written down which was Indian tradition in ancient times the Buddhists didn't have their scriptures written down until what was it like at least five it was like 500 years after the death of the Buddha that finally the Depedeca was written down and The Janes were the same way but they didn't have as many scholars because they were hardcore Aesthetics they were out torturing themselves and so they just lost their their scriptures and so they had to have a convention where they get back together and like reformulate you know they'd still have fragments that

they would like edit together and maybe add some new stuff and that happened twice so I think it is more likely that the the Striking resemblance between the story of mahavira and the story of of godama are because the jains copied the Buddhists rather than the other way around and I mean the story of the Buddha is is well maintained from relatively very ancient times I mean there is some mythology added but by even the mythology itself was pretty much settled within like 100 years after the time of the Buddha and that is older than the latest resention of the jainus texts

so yeah I'm just going with the evidence

and just sort of some Occam's razor and Common Sense I'd say that probably in the Jains borrowed the legend of the Buddha for their the biography of their own founder just because they lost so much of their own traditions because it wasn't written down and their monks just weren't as scholarly because they were just moving in a different direction than the Buddhists to some degree I mean they were just more this extreme ascetics

that they just borrowed it from the Buddhists so that's it that's the last question by golly I get caught by surprise by the last question a lot of

the time

so if you have any questions you uh are

very welcome to leave them in the

comments below and if I get lots and

lots of questions I'll just have to

start doing these more often

and uh please uh subscribe if you

haven't already and hit the like button

if you haven't already and look at the

URL links

and be happy

hello and welcome to episode here I'm
going to look up here episode 47 of
question and answer I am your host Ponyo
bossa

and uh as usual we've got the goodly
sized list of questions including one
question that may require its own
separate video

and uh

I just finished tearing apart a chicken
coop

and also the big news is that just
yesterday I saw that we have at least
two loaches left in our fish pond which
is like a big excitement for me because
I get Loach insecurity and I haven't

seen two at the same time
since like last year sometime
but the weather's warming up and so
they're cold-blooded they are what is it
poikilotherms yeah POI collotherms and
so with every 10 degrees Celsius
increase in temperature a cold-blooded
animal's metabolism doubles and so
they're like really getting worked up
out there and they're like swimming up
to the surface usually they stay down at
the bottom any derbus and stuff but now
they're like swimming up to the top and
everything it's it's really exciting
and before I get started on these
questions
um I should say that I actually had to

do homework on this one I had to
actually study something
on on this

um

well usually I don't I just like to this
answer these off the top of my head you
know without having to like look in
books or anything and it makes for easy
easy answers because you know somebody
asked me you know what was the Linus
pauling's attitude towards Buddhism I
can just say I don't know and then move
on to the next question
but I actually had to uh read a few
texts
just to refresh my memory about what

they say just so I can comment on them

so anyway

ah

first question is from the Arya swasti
project

and the Arya swastik project says

greetings Ponyo I've heard you mention

and I agree that hardship can prompt

deeper spiritual understanding a lot of

other schools of thought rely on prayer

magic causing changes Etc since they

might just be making more issues for

themselves especially if they have no

self-awareness or spiritual awareness if

hard times can give us deeper

understanding why wouldn't we want all

the hard times we could endure on that

note why would we want to wish hard
times on an enemy since it would just
make them more enlightened if anything
we should never shirk our Karma and
never wish ill will on anyone what are
your thoughts on this addendum if I were
to be honest the worst times in my life
brought the deepest understanding and
growth although some of the some of
those I would never ever want to
experience again

well that's a good question

and uh

there's a lot I could say about this for
one thing

um even though

um suffering can cause people to reach out to something higher or if you get into a a situation that's so bad that your habitual way of dealing with life just doesn't work anymore you can have a kind of breakdown and then you become very open to new new ideas and um some people have capitalized on this like uh like Chinese thought reform you know like the brainwashing camps and all that they were based on that where they would cause a person to just have a breakdown just through the hardships they're undergoing and then because their habitual way of dealing with life wasn't working anymore then you've got the commissar or whoever just like

programs them to be a good communist and
um there's a lot of that like military
basic training some spiritual Retreats
work this way where you just get into
like a crisis and then suddenly all
these habits that you've been clinging
to without even meaning to cling to them
um you can let go of them more easily
and accept different things but
um it doesn't always work that way some
people just have a breakdown and just
stay broken down but um let's see here I
gotta answer this question
so let's see if hard times can give us
deeper understanding why wouldn't we
want all the hard times we can endure

well if you get too many hard times I mean really you can just break you and this is like the difference between Buddhism and certain other ascetic um schools of philosophy or schools of spirituality in ancient times like the jains or like the ajivakas who they were literally torturing themselves they were trying to accelerate the burning off of karma but the middle path in Buddhism is um you know it's the middle path between at least one of the middle paths in Buddhism is the middle path between self-indulgence and self-torture so you're not trying to avoid unpleasant things necessarily you're not seeking them out either you're just living your

life as wisely as peacefully as as
non-harmfully as you can and then
whatever comes at you through the power
of your own Karma you deal with it and
that's that's probably the wisest way of
going about it like if you just
steadfastly avoid any kind of anything
that makes you uncomfortable then you're
not going to make much progress on the
other hand if you're just diving into it
then I mean you might be just making
trouble

and I mean you might just dive into too
much too much for you to deal with but
if you just let it happen naturally
which it always does I mean there's no

escape from it then that's probably the
wisest way of going about it

so let's see here

uh we should never shirk our comment

never wish ill will on anyone

yeah well usually if you're wanting bad

things to happen to somebody and bad

things do happen to somebody then

I mean most people if they just have

something bad happen to them it doesn't

cause them to have any any kind of

Spiritual Awakening but it can't happen

like I knew this uh woman

who got cancer and and she was just sort

of like um just really like a

self-oriented normie just kind of living

at the surface and then she got cancer

and it was you know she had to have some
of her body parts removed and so forth
and she thought she might die and it
really caused her to reevaluate her
existence and she became a deeper and
better person after that so that can
happen too

let's see

but yeah it's true with me also I mean
the two main growth spurts of like
spiritual

like Awakening happen as a result of
just being in a state of real crisis
just practically hitting rock bottom and
then like I said when you hit one of
these crises a crisis point it really

can just cause you to let go of these
habits that you've been clinging to
consciously or subconsciously for for
years and years and years and and reach
out for something else
and I think Ram Das said a long time ago
and it haunted me for many years in one
of his books he said the absolute
despair is a prerequisite to significant
spiritual growth and I always hope that
he was wrong but in my own experience in
life does seem to Bear it out to some
degree
so
let's see oh there's another part here
wait no no that's the next question
never mind

okay so that's what that's what I have
to say about that it's best not to seek
out bad things to happen to you not to
just avoid them at all costs just live
your life as wisely as you can and
whatever the universe throws at you you
you know you deal you deal with it as as
wisely as you can

so I'll just move on to the next
question

on the topic of liminality and then in
parentheses he says naughty discussion
on Hanson

and then he says the concept itself is
fascinating I agree and if one is
liminal wouldn't they have to be in the

correct spot of Truth at all times since
nothing is certain and nothing is
concrete even concrete

would you say that if Buddhism itself is
an explanation or expression of
liminality well I don't fully understand
all this question with regard to
liminality the Arya swasti project I
think partly maybe mainly because I was
um talking a lot about a book by George
Hansen called the trickster and the
Paranormal which is I consider to be one
of the most important books I've ever
read it'd be like definitely probably in
the top 10 of the most important books
I've ever read just with regard to like
posing a significant paradigm shift a

significant change in the way you
understand reality
and uh in the book he's talking about
how liminality how like the breakdown of
order and regularity causes what is
called liminality which means like
you're reaching a kind of threshold you
know or it's sort of an intermediate
State between two
concretes you're kind of in this vague
Zone and that causes a certain
uncertainty and chaos to manifest in the
world and he mentions in his book about
how witches for example in order to do
magic they actually create some of this
chaos you know they'll violate taboos

they'll violate societal Norms which
kind of causes a breakdown of order and
regularity which then allows chaos to
come through the weak spots they have
created

so um

where he's the question here is would
you say that uh Buddhism itself is an
explanation or expression of liminality
well

um to some degree Buddhism does create
liminality and like just for example
like a monk a renuncian is just going
against all the social norms well not
maybe not all of them but he is
violating social norms you know he's
just becoming a radical homeless

Wanderer no no family no
no money and um that in itself is
creating a kind of liminality and he's
just going like in the Buddhist time
especially a Buddhist renunciate would
just go out and live alone in a forest
and um I mean that can create some
liminality too but I mean just the
middle path I was talking about the
middle path just a few minutes ago where
it's in between the the extremes I mean
it's not just with regard to the middle
path between
um self self-indulgence and self-torture
it's the middle path between just about
anything is and isn't you know it's just

it's just this total liminal path really
and it allows for more
opportunities spiritual opportunities
but then also

um there is one statement in the
trickster in the Paranormal that really
intrigued me and he's talking about how
meditation is liminal because you're
observing your own mind and that creates
like

self-referential short circuit like so
being self-referential is liminal it
causes paradox you know like

um the reason why you can make a
statement that is neither true nor false
is if the statement is itself
self-referential like this statement is

false

it's referring to itself and thus it can
create this Paradox where the statement
itself can be neither true nor false
and when you're meditating you're doing
that at a larger scale you're the mind
is observing itself is becoming
self-referential

and then

all kinds of weird things can happen and
people do have weird experiences through
meditation some people acquire psychic
powers through meditation and so forth
so Buddhism does have built into it a
kind of liminality
so yeah

so we'll just move on to uh
the Arya swasti Project's next question
addendum to liminality just playing with
the idea here I don't expect a deep
response but it occurred to me and
thought it was interesting would you say
that all or nothing thinking
or objective thinking in any case is
never certain
it couldn't be never because that in
itself would be

All or nothing and this also this this
this q a has a number of questions that
I do not fully grasp the meaning of the
question and this is one of those
questions

um would you say that all or nothing

thinking or objective thinking in any case is never certain well the person who thinks in All or Nothing terms um yeah they're they're certain pretty much all the time unless they just honestly admit that they don't know something and just avoid the the yes or no the is or isn't but um in reality any statement you make about the outside world is never certain like uh Spinoza and David Hume in the west both were made I mean they made the statement I think in in hume's case it was called humans Fork where the only certainty you can have is regard to something that's completely

self-contained something completely
contained within your own mind so some
kind of a logical
statement for example you might have
worked out some laws of geometry or
something but so I mean the entire thing
is in your head

so that can be certain but with regard
to anything in the outside world there's
always going to be uncertainty because
you can't be sure that you're not
hallucinating that you're not insane in
some respect and in Buddhism anyone who
isn't fully enlightened is considered to
be insane

so

yeah

um

so I'm not exactly sure what the main point of this question is though would you say the All or Nothing thinking or objective thinking in any case is never certain

uh yeah well I guess that's my best answer because I really do not fully understand the implications of this question so I'll just move on to the artist swasti Project's next question and it says we've seen the ring and heard the announcement but when do we get to see a picture of your girl when do we get to see the bride to be once again congratulations maybe show your

favorite pick of you two together

and then in parentheses he has

respectfully submitted

um well this question was asked on the

Discord server and my sweetheart does

have a picture of

at least one third of her face

um as her avatar on Discord so you get

to see a picture over there or at least

a picture of some of her but with regard

to my favorite picture of both of us we

don't really have a whole lot of

pictures of both of us together

um because either you got to do the

selfie like reaching out or else you

have to ask somebody else to take the

picture but um we did have a picture

taken of us when we were in like at Lake
Erie there's this famous lighthouse
there that was built in the early 1800s
I think and I just happened to have it
here right here

let's see so cover up this part because
that's not the picture in question
but there we are that's us sitting
underneath this Lighthouse at Lake Erie
when we were on vacation
so there you go there she is in all of
her her loveliness

so we'll just move on to the next
question

uh Arya swasti project says I'm really
interested in this liminality concept

yeah I got him intrigued with this book

I think

do you think you could make a suggestion

or two of liminal trickster behavior

that would lead to True paranormal

experiences well I already mentioned

just the self-referential aspect of of

meditation also

um I mentioned that that certain people

like witches tend to just deliberately

violate taboos and social norms to

create liminality through which this

um like Juju this and this

paranormal paranormality can arise

and I refuse to say paranormal see

except in quotation marks right now

so he also points out in the book that a

lot of Psychics tend to be
um deviants in a certain way and I'm not
even I'm not saying deviance in a like a
negative like a pervert like pervert
kind of you know in that kind of way but
they deviate from just the societal norm
and so he points out that many famous
psychics or magicians you know like
Aleister Crowley they were homosexual or
bisexual or they had some other kind of
sexual Kink that kind of generated
liminality but I'm not suggesting the
Arya swasti project become gay
but there are ways of going about it and
any kind of system will have pretty much
built into the system

any like ways of creating liminality
which then sort of creates a like a
portal or a threshold through which
um like

forces Beyond this version of reality
can bleed through into our reality
so

yeah I I would suggest though you don't
do anything really wildly like certain
taboos are there for good reasons you
know you know don't don't do incest that
kind of a thing

um

but I mean what works for you I mean you
might do some uh introspection and find
out what kind of uh violation of norms
would work best for you

um like for for a monk celibacy itself
is kind of a violation of nature you
know sort of like a crime against nature
almost

so I'll just move on to the Arya swasti
projects next and last question
which he uh asked just under the wire
see the way I the way I I make this list
is it's pretty much in chronological
order the first person to ask a question
gets to be at the top of the list last
person to ask a question usually is at
the bottom but if they've already asked
a question earlier then all their
questions are in a row so the the Aria
swasti project asked the first and

possibly last question but um they're
all here at the beginning

and he says

after researching neem Caroli Baba after
hearing you speak of him I found this
quote

it is very difficult to know exactly
what good should come out of a
particular situation to attempt to
manipulate circumstances so your idea of
good can come about is to let the ego
play God and that as you know can and
does backfire unquote however he and
many others are known to influence
circumstances so with that being said
I'm confident that changes can be made
Beyond or Pera outside of normal

I.E repetitious movement of thought
prayer ceremony or even trickery so how
do we know when to initiate changes to a
situation or just take our licks
well you just have to rely upon your own
um your own wisdom your own intuition
your own rationality to know if it's you
know it's sort of like the the prayer of
of Saint Francis of Assisi which I don't
fully remember but it's like you know
give me the wisdom to know you know what
I can change and what I can't change now
give me the wisdom to accept what I
can't change and and to be able to
change what I can change for the better
kind of a thing

I was going to name curly Baba he's he
doesn't necessarily play by his own
rules because

um according to Ram Das I mean he just
there was really nobody there he really
didn't have

um if he he apparently had an ego but I
mean he he was no longer identified with
it it was just nature taking its course
so he told lies even though he tell
other people it's very serious you don't
tell lies you know that's a very bad
thing to do but I mean he was just kind
of Beyond

um you know the rules of how to get
enlightened or how to how to how to meet
God because he already met him

apparently

um

but that's that's sort of uh opening the
door to

some uh scandalous ideas

so let's see here

ah commonly changes can be made Beyond

yeah I mean obviously sometimes you need

to make changes I mean you can't be

totally passive sometimes you have to be

an active agent in this world you're

tired you get a flat tire on the highway

I mean you got to do something about you

don't just sit there with your on the

side of the road with a flat tire I mean

obviously you have to do something about

it

so

um you just accept the situation as well
as you can and do what you think is best

so

but it is it is true sometimes if you
try to improve the situation it just
makes things worse then that is true but
you have to use your own wisdom and
intuition and rationality to some degree
and just do the best you can and we all
make mistakes

but if your heart is in the right place
you'll probably do the right thing more
often than not

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Austin

and Austin says can dialectical
materialism be looked at through a
karmic lens well anything volitional can
be looked at through a karmic lens I'm
not exactly sure what he means this is
another one of those questions that I do
not fully grasp because there's
different ways of interpreting it

um

dialectical materialism for those of you
who are innocent of Marxism bless your
hearts

um yeah it's pretty much what Marxism is
based on it's a kind of I mean it's
ultimately goes back to Hegel with his
dialectic except Marx was certainly not

an idealist like Hegel was he was a
materialist pretty much a spiritually
comatose materialist

but um

I mean would you refer to the just the
manifestation of dialectical materialism
in this world I mean that's our Karma
that would be looking at it through a
karmic lenses you know if we didn't have
the karma to experience it we wouldn't
be experiencing it we didn't have the
karma to hear about it we wouldn't hear
about it so there's that
or you can refer to it as I mean even
though Marx himself apparently was of
the idea that I mean there's hardly any
free will maybe none that we're just a

product of our culture our economic
system you know because that's that's
pretty much what Marxism is based on you
want everyone to be happy you got to
change the economic system and you know
you want people to think the right
thoughts you got to change the system
you know it's coming from outside just
what we are is not generated from within
it's just imposed upon us from society
is largely what Marx was teaching as far
as I can understand Marx I mean he's
boring as hell and I'm not a Marxist so
I'm No Authority on this
but um
uh yeah I mean if you want to become a

Marxist that is your volitional choice
I assume and that would be karmic too
and it's really not good karma I mean
like Marxist societies do not end well
just history has shown we've got over a
century now of stagnant and failed
economies and totalitarianism and
genocide

and that's all I mean from the Buddhist
point of view that's all karmic you know
whatever is the result I mean whatever
is a volitional action is Karma and that
causes the fruition in with regard to
what is happening back to the person who
made those volitional choices
so yeah I guess dialectical materials
okay looked at through a karmic lens

um anything can be looked at through a
karmic lens in one way or another but
I'm really not sure exactly what he had
in mind here so I'll just move on to
Austin's next question

congratulations Ponyo boss I'm so happy
to hear of your engagement please tell
us how you propose that's kind of a
personal question isn't it
sakes

I mean it was uh

I got her a ring and I was going to take
the day off and it was it was on her
birthday

her the day I proposed I was intending
to propose to her on her birthday which

I mean you could look at that cynically
you know it's like you know I could just
give her the the ring as a birthday
present it's thereby saving me the
effort of having to get her another
birthday present although I did get her
another birthday present it came in the
mail and she opened it but long before
her birthday so that kind of wrecked
that too so anyway she was just
sometimes she'd just be in this blah
kind of mood and just uh you shouldn't
take the day off on my birthday you know
just just keep working it doesn't matter
I don't want to do anything on my
birthday she's really not a birthday
oriented person I think most women above

the age of 2010 to kind of downplay
birthdays anyway and so I'm just getting
kind of

kind of borderline panicky definitely
concerned about how I don't want her to
be all depressed on her on her birthday
because that's the day I want to propose
to her but um

yeah it worked out fine she was in a
good mood

um somehow I managed to help her be in a
happy mood by the time she was opening
her presents in the afternoon and one of
the the present well the main present
was this diamond ring that I got for her
and she liked it a lot she says it's the

nicest ring she's ever had

so and then I asked her to marry me and

I didn't get down on one knee until she

I mean I've never done this before you

know I didn't know if people really do

are supposed to get down on one knee but

then she said

um she was her understanding that I

should get down on one knee and put the

ring onto her finger so I did that and I

asked her if she'd marry me and she said

and I quote of course

so it all worked out well

so I'll just move on to the next

question from Austin here

Austin asks personal questions sometimes

let's see but this one is uh more about

him than about me so
there is that I feel like I have
terrible Karma especially at this moment
in my life if I do a lot of good things
will my bad karma get weighed out
by The Good Karma and yeah there is a
suta and I've mentioned this before on Q
and A's I'm pretty sure that there is a
pseudo where the Buddha Compares a
person's Bad Karma to a handful of salt
and if you pour the handful of salt into
a cup of water it's so salty that you
can't drink the water but if you pour
that same handful of salt into a pool of
of water and it dissolves then you
hardly notice the salt at all because

you've dissolved it into a larger amount
of water much larger

and he Compares that with you know doing
good and doing bad if you've got a lot
of Bad Karma and not a whole lot of good
karma which is the water then yeah it's
going to be predominantly bad but if you
do as much good as you can you know earn
enough Merit then that dilutes down the
bad I mean it's still the same amount
more or less but at least it's it's
mitigated

and I've been that way

um in my life whenever I have something
really bad happen to me something good
tends to happen to mitigate it so I
think I do have a fair amount of good

karma in my life it's like for example
the first time the first two times
I I got malaria in Burma I mean getting
malaria is not good it's really icky and
it's always the worst kind it's
falcipram the kind that kills people
and I was living in a remote area with
no car both times and both times
somebody just shows up in a jeep that
day and they're able to just haul me
into the Jeep and take me to a doctor
that was the the two times I was
hospitalized another time

um

I uh I used to keep biting into rocks in
my food in Burma they thrashed the rice

and they thresh their beans and so forth
on the ground and little brown rocks get
mixed in with the beans little white
rocks get mixed in with the rice and you
bite into rocks in your food it's not
good and sometimes I bite into a rock in
my food and it'd be this crack and it
would hurt and I'd be concerned you know
I'd be reaching around in my mouth and
my finger to see if I broke a tooth or
knocked a filling out or something and
through Good Karma I suppose in part at
least I never broke a tooth when I was
out in the in the sticks except later
one time I did but at that time you know
I was I'd been in Burma for
um a few to several years and uh it kept

happening I bite into the Rock and ended
and then finally I happened to be in
Rangoon attending to Visa issues or
something so I was in a relatively Rich
neighbor hood of Rangoon
and

a servant girl I went for alms servant
girl gave me some Bean Curry that had
the little brown rock concealed in it
and I bite into that rock and I broke
three T's it just came in like two
bottom teeth and one upper tooth and
it's like just right in between the the
space between the teeth like so I got
three all at the same time but as it
turned out through the mitigating

circumstances the servant girl happened to be the servant girl of the dean and Rector of the Rangoon dental college and he was a dentist and he was like right across the street so I just went right across the street he fixed my teeth for free became my dentist for free after that while I was living in Burma and I had the same dentist as the dictator because he was the number one dentist in the entire country so if you do a lot of Merit then it at least you're going to get mitigating circumstances it's not going to be just a like a nightmarish hellscape and I would say to Austin here that I mean you don't have all Bad Karma

obviously because at least you've you've
had the Good Fortune of hearing about
dharma you know you're you're obviously
um earning Merit through through seeking
the truth and trying to trying to know
reality and so forth so that's I mean
that's very big Good Karma just just uh
to be like spiritually searching
in in a more or less wise way too
and then yeah that's about some of the
best Karma you can get
and uh I think it's mostly Mahayana
though like in I think it's The Diamond
Cutter sutra that says that
um
uh what is it

yeah they're just memorizing one verse
from the from the Sutra and like under
trying to understand it and maybe you
know sharing with others is better Karma
than just you know giving all of your
money to to buy clothing and food and
medicine for for the needy people
because it's sort of a transcendental
kind of Merit that you're earning
so yeah the answer to this the the long
answer to the short question
is uh definitely it mitigates the Bad
Karma and dilutes it down if you make a
lot of good karma so just you know help
others you know instead of squishing the
spider just catch it and let it go with
a blessing in your heart that kind of a

thing and don't go around bragging about it either just keep it secret that's one thing I've I really like from biblical Christianity is the idea that when you do good don't broadcast it to other people don't brag about it just be quiet about it

you know if you're fasting you know just pretend like you're not fasting I mean if somebody asks you you don't lie but still

you know just advertising to everybody so I'll just move on to the next question from Austin here how do Buddhists Cast Away evil spirits well the standard way of casting away

evil spirits for terrible design

different kinds of Buddhism will have

different ways I'm sure the Tibetans

have like various strange ways of of

dealing with evil spirits but uh in

terrible Buddhism the one main way of

casting away evil spirits is sending

Mata like reciting the metal suta the

whole mental suit of the origin story

which may be just Apocrypha but the

origin story to the metal suta of the

sutiny Pata which is one of the best

known uh paritas or protection chants in

terrible Buddhism

um I mean if a Buddhist if they know how

to chant one tsutop it's usually the

metal suto and according to the story

there was a bunch of monks who were meditating in this forest and because of their virtue it was sort of robbing the terrestrial deities in the area like tree spirits and so forth it was robbing them of their ability to fly up into their trees so they're like stuck on the ground they're bothered by this they resent these monks living there until they start like harassing the monks by essentially like haunting them you know they're they're presenting headless bodies and bodyless heads and you know weird moaning sounds and so forth and so they're disturbing amongst meditation hoping that the monks will

just clear out so the monks eventually
do clear out but they go to the Buddha
and they tell them what happened and he
said just be meta at them and he taught
them the matosuta to to chant as a way
of just sort of emanating loving
kindness or friendliness you know
friendly feeling
um maybe spiritual love
to to these beings and it it worked and
so the beings just stopped causing
problems and uh they got along fine
after that and that really is
um the standard way like like demonic
possession he's just chant the matosuto
or just being love at these beings or
just hauntings that kind of a thing

um and it apparently does work it's like the best way of defeating an enemy is to turn them into a friend and some hauntings apparently are you know you've got these unhappy beings that you know they they want something they're they're dissatisfied they're not really trying to be evil or anything they're just suffering they're in a lower realm than the human Realm and just you know sending love to them can't uplift them enough that they they can uh they can leave but um I can't really entirely vouch for the 100 effectiveness of this method but

that is the standard method in uh in
terravana Buddhism
of dealing with evil spirits and enemies
too just uh beam love at them which I
was really unpalatable to a lot of
people

um I knew this school teacher in Burma
who was really I mean she was like a
female Burmese version of the Apache
Warchief Geronimo she looked like him
too and she would brag to me sometimes
about how she she recites the mental
suta every morning and sends method to
all beings but I mean she was really
like a Hatfield or a McCoy because she
was always feuding with some neighbor or
other and she was she was feuding with

this one neighbor in particular and I pointed out to her I mean if you're sending method to all beings you're also sending message to this guy that you've been fighting with and she all of a sudden just flares up and says no not him

and so you got to be try I mean most people just can't you know it's like in Christianity too you know you know love your enemies bless those that curse you how many Christians actually do that there are some I I admit that there are some but uh they're probably not the majority of Christians it's not easy it goes against human nature and it it's

sort of counterintuitive if you got a bad person or some you know malevolent being causing trouble for you that you know you want to return evil for evil that returning good for evil it just seems like you're just strengthening them but it doesn't really work that way because as a general rule any any malevolent being anyone who is bad is unhappy now anyone who's like uh just a hateful violent is making trouble for people on purpose they're not a happy person and so by helping them to be happier like beaming love at them um it it kind of uplifts them and it makes them less willing to mess with

people

because they're messing with people

because they're so unhappy they want to

see other people unhappy too or

something along those lines

so I'll just move on to the next

question from Austin

which is please tell me how Buddhist

prayer Works how does it differ from

Christian prayer why do Buddhists pray

if there is no God to pray to well

prayer really is

um discouraged

in uh in terrible in the polytext the

Buddha kind of makes fun of of praying

you know it's like he's saying that a

person who's praying is like a person standing on one side of a river just praying to the other side to come over to this side so he doesn't have to cross it

and um yeah so prayer really is not like Orthodox Buddhism I mean later on when Buddhism became like more mainstream more normies were getting interested you know more lay people were becoming Buddhist they want to pray and so they pray to the Buddha and then you get like pure land stuff where it's it's almost you know it's heavily based on praying to some Cosmic Buddha up and up in heaven somewhere or in some pure land to the West somewhere

or whatever but in Orthodox terravora
it's more meditation than prayer prayer
is you know you're asking for favors for
some you know you're asking for help
and um

you just have to do it yourself I mean
this self-reliance is is heavily
stressed and terrible at Buddhism so
some Buddhists do pray to the Buddha and
like I think I was talked about this in
the last q a where I knew this Village
doctor

who uh was one of the few people in the
area who spoke English and we talked
sometimes and he told me that he prayed
to the Buddha and I asked him like I

mean the Buddha no longer exists in this world he no longer exists in any world why would you pray to him why would you pray to someone who doesn't exist and he was saying well the Buddha could see into the future and then he could see me praying to him and then maybe he would you know send matau or help in some way so they you can you can justify it but really you gotta kind of go your own route and meditation is definitely much more encouraged in terrible Buddhism than prayer because prayer is you're essentially asking for something whereas with meditation you're just trying to understand your own mind so that you can um cure yourself of your own Insanity so

to speak

so so I think I'll just move on to the

next question this is from SS

and SS says what is the best translation

of the polycanon I read tunisaro bikus

by or I read tenisa obicus by default

because they are easily found in one

place and for free

well

um with regard to a translation of the

entire polycanon the entire polycanon in

the Burmese resention of it is 40

volumes it's you know like the

Encyclopedia Britannica including the

knowledge in brief you know it's it's a

lot and so I don't know of one person

who has translated the entire thing
usually you have people translating
certain texts and certain translations
of certain texts are better than other
translations of certain texts and um
um so yeah there's there's not just
I mean a translation of the polycanon
you're more likely to find a translation
of the majum in akaya translation of
divinia a translation of you know the
some Mutiny Kaya translation of the
sutiny Pata Trend lots of translations
of dhamapada
um and then
um you just try to find a good
translation of that particular text
and

um probably the the two best translators
of poly into English nowadays would be
kubody despite his his inane politics
um he's he's a good translator because
he's good he understands the poly
language he has at least a superficial
familiar familiarity with a lot of the
things that are being discussed just
just the the philosophy part he
understands that well with regard to the
meditation stuff he uh I've heard that
he doesn't meditate much if at all so I
mean with regard to that he knows the
theory that he's read in books and heard
from other people but he's not really
um he's not rendering the instructions

we're guided much by his own experience
apparently uh ajanta nisaro that SS
mentions here he also is a good
translator

he's a he's kind of self-indulgent
you know he doesn't really follow the
the standard translations or the
renderings of certain Paulie words and
his translations of poetry are so
idiosan

idiosyncratic and self-indulgent that I
get embarrassed sometimes it's like a
good translator should be as invisible
as possible a good translator should
make it so that you're reading in
English as though you're reading the
Paulie you know it should be as close to

an effect on you as if you were just
fluent in Paulie and reading the poly
itself

and so it's best just to be invisible
but some of ajan tanistro's translations
you might as well just include every few
lines look at me here I am on John
tenistro translating this

so

I knocked the picture over

excuse me

don't want lying there on the floor face
down

so

um

uh nyamoli the uh the the deceased in

the automotive not the new famous

nanomoli

um it's like the the old famous he was

an excellent translator he was kind of

idiosyncratic too and that he tried very

hard

to use one word

in English for the one word in poly and

sometimes one word in poly can have lots

of meanings like like dama

I mean it can have lots of different

meanings and he would just come up with

the word like idea and you just like

whenever dhamma appeared regardless of

the context he'd try to use the same

word or like Brahma I think he used uh

Divine or Divinity something along those

lines so brahmanas were called divines
and

um yeah it didn't it didn't work out
very well but he was really a brilliant
translator

um there are good translator KR Norman
is really I mean he understands the poly
really well although he really is not
interested in the philosophy or what
it's saying so any kind of deep
philosophical stuff or mystical stuff he
just doesn't get

um so yeah you just have to just find
good translators and when in doubt I
mean bikubody and ajan tunisaro are good
translators

so

um

the

bikubody's translation of the Maji
manikaya is really good probably the
best because it's based on our venerable
nanamoli that I just mentioned and
bikubody just kind of kind of fix it up
a little bit where he's just taking the
weird idiosyncratic renderings and just
switching it over to more mainstream
standard I mean it is good to kind of
have

um this kind of follow the the tradition
with regard to translating they're like
meta is loving kindness or uh Sadi
batana is you know the foundations of

mindfulness they're

um

at least you know what the poly term is
when you see the English term but if
you're using like a radically different
term

like uh

like let's see what would ajanta ISRO
used for in the the four foundations of
mindfulness or

um

it's like frames of reference or
something so that unless you're familiar
with what he translates as what you can
really get confused because you're
really not sure what the poly term is

but if you're completely innocent of
poly terminology

um then maybe maybe doesn't matter all
that much

so I think I'll just uh move on to the
next question which is from librarian
crazy

and librarian crazy says Bonte I watched
two or three of your q and A's and read
some of your blogs you mentioned you
think John of the Cross is probably an
enlightened Guy what's the reason for
this what are traits that make him seem
like he is one of enlightened beings

um yeah I have mentioned that Saint John
the cross who was uh discalced Carmelite
Mystic in the Roman Catholic Church he

lived in Spain in the 1500s

um I think there's a chance that he may

have been fully enlightened because

the way he describes

practice and the fruits of practice come

very close to what terravonna Buddhism

describes as practice in the fruits of

practice and I mean it's it's strange

that

um he's he's the mystical doctor of the

Catholic church so any anything that

Saint John on the cross says about

mysticism is just Dogma for the Catholic

Church

so I mean I mean he was being persecuted

by the not only by the Inquisition but

he was being persecuted by the uh
unreformed carmelites it was it was
really strange there's all this politics
going on and he was getting ready to
just go to Mexico and become a
missionary I almost said a mercenary
just become a missionary in Mexico when
right before he died because it was just
too much it was just all this politics
and persecution and just trouble making
and stuff going on in in the Catholic
church at the time
um but yeah he talks about like the the
three stages of of progress in in
spirituality which is you've got the
beginner the Adept and the perfect
and that pretty much fits in with what

theravada Buddhism refers to as the

Pluto genome because the common person

the Seiko the one in training and the

aseka the one no longer in training and

the asega is

perfect or he's fully enlightened and so

he's got like the same he's got the same

practices of like mindfulness and and

like genre like what what they're

calling High contemplation I mean it's

got to be at least second genre and he

was just based upon his his ways of

talking about it through experience with

like a voice of authority is pretty

obvious that he was a master of of Jonah

and so this it's just the overlap then

just the Striking similarity of his descriptions of you know Enlightenment and so forth like he's saying that an enlightened being like someone who has reached the stage of perfection which I mean I was amazed when I read this because according to the Bible I mean even Jesus denies being you know being good you know only God is good you know that nobody is worthy everyone is a sinner

and here's John lacrosse talking about becoming God through participation and subsequently I've heard that in Greek Orthodox mysticism they also teach the same thing that you can become God through participation you mortify your

own self-will you know your own
preferences and so forth and you just
empty yourself out and then you become
like a puppet of God you're no longer
moved by your own self-will your own
human will that you move by the will of
God and that's becoming God through
participation you're becoming you know
God's hand puppet or whatever and that
also closely resembles terrible Buddhism
because in terracotta Buddhism
um an arhat has no will he has no
volition he's no longer making Karma and
so again it's these these continual
overlaps where the you get to this
really advanced level of spirituality

and it's just explaining pretty much the same things but within a different like a religious context like a different uh cultural conditioning you know you're trying to explain the same things but from two different two different cultural conditionings which make some of the theory different even though the practices and the results are essentially the same so yeah I would say St John on the cross um he may have been wiser than the founder of his his religion as far as I know I think Eckhart Tolle and cartola Matt Meister Eckhart also I mean he was a very Advanced Mystic he also may have been uh very Advanced spiritually and

possibly an or a haunt like a Christian
or on but I don't know enough about
Meister Eckhart I've read the the
complete works of Saint John of the
Cross so I I'm pretty familiar with what
he he was saying
so I'll just move on to librarian
crazy's next question
which is a lot of time monks are
believed by their loyal followers as an
aura hunt like ajan mahabua I watched
some of his dhamma talks where he gave
discourses while chewing Beetle nuts and
spit in buckets
doesn't seem like a very admirable
conduct for a normal person let alone

arahant in my humble opinion what do you think about this

well I remember one time there was this Texan hermit who lived in a Big Hollow Tree who explained to me that when when uh

uh a Burmese person or an Asian Buddhist says that a certain ajan or Seattle is an aura hunt all that means is that they are their devotee

you know that's just the way it is and one time I went to see this this Seattle who was considered to be in our hunt

I've met a few monks who are considered to be honor hunts and this one in particular his name was mahabodi in Seattle or something and on the way

there I asked the driver who was one of
his devotees are you sure he's
enlightened and he's like hey Johnny I'm
sure and he's he's enlightened how they
would possibly know I mean they couldn't
possibly know but they're sure
and the Burmese in particular tend to be
that way they're sure even if they don't
have a clue really you know is it going
to rain next Wednesday yep it's gonna
rain

and they don't know they're just for
some reason it's just the way their mind
works it's it's uh they're not really
sure of they're not comfortable with
ambiguity they they want to they want a

yes or no you know

um but anyway this mahabodhi eye in

Seattle or it was something along those
lines

um

I went to see him and it was just like a
circus at his Monastery there was all
these things like uh Alchemists and
stuff walking also statues and pagodas
being built everywhere it was it was
pretty much like a festival there every
day and um everyone's like standing
around waiting for the the aura hunt
Seattle to come out and and eat his meal
he finally comes out like a quarter to
12 which is you know you got 15 minutes
to eat your meal before you're breaking

the rules and he comes out and he sits
in this Pavilion one of the first things
he does he just like blows his nose into
his hand and then just wipes the snot on
the wall

and this is an aura hunt you know
supposedly

so

yeah it's really hard to say I mean you
pretty much have to be enlightened
um to know if somebody else is in line
but I mean if you see somebody that's
just like you know screaming in the face
of an old lady and kicking her or
something that's a pretty good
indication that he's not enlightened

but um didn't scream in the faces of old ladies and kick them as far as I know he did write a really bizarre biography of his teacher on

that you wonder how an extremely wise person can come up with this but again it's just traditional there's all these talks about you know those default finding Cobra dragon and the ogre the ajan mon had to deal with out in the woods and just on and on and on

this whole multitudes of like dead Buddhas and their their enlightened disciples that are coming back to the Earth somehow

after you know transcending some sorrow just to just to come and hang out with

ajan man and so forth

um yeah I'm pretty skeptical with regard to that sort of thing I have to admit chewing Beetle nuts and spitting it into a spittoon spitting the beetle spit into a spittoon I mean that's that's not too bad you know there have been like very Advanced uh Hindu swamis that smoke cigarettes ajan man himself was a chain smoker or so I've been told which would make an aura hunt literally a drug addict but maybe you know I mean at least it's not like fentanyl or something I mean tobacco really isn't that horrible it's not like he's getting drunk I

suppose

so

yeah it's really hard to say I mean with regard to enlightened beings you can only guess you just you just take make your best guess

um

but I would say that at least at the very least he's much more advanced than the average person even if he wasn't like fully enlightened even if that even means anything well then sorry context because I'm I'm thinking that within the context of samsara you know the thinking mind and everything a fully enlightened being really doesn't mean anything because any kind of meaning would make

them part of you know like it would sort of bring them back into samsara or something

it's yeah I mean it may be it's sort of like a paradox where within the samsara context just Enlightenment is just impossible

so they have to transcend samsara and even though their body and their mind to some degree is still here in this world um they're not identified with it you know they're sort of Beyond

so it's really hard to say like neem curly Baba that I mentioned I think he may have been fully enlightened but he was a rascal I mean he did not behave

the way the stereotypical Saint like
Ramana maharshi behaved

but

he was extremely Advanced and I've got
no doubt about that

so I think I'll just move on to

librarian crazies next question here

what constitutes a sexual misconduct in

Buddhism the rules in the sutras seem

pretty abstract does having premarital

sex with a girlfriend count as

misconduct well I'll answer this last

part first does having pre-marital sex

with a girlfriend count as misconduct

not necessarily you don't have to be

married in order to avoid sexual

misconduct I mean if if two people

love each other and they're faithful to each other

you know they're pretty much married

already I mean just just having a ceremony

um and getting like this piece of paper

you know the marriage license or

whatever that really doesn't change all

that much you know the ring on the

finger doesn't make you

um you know like a loving faithful

couple

but you would have to you know have

um you have to be faithful to each other

but getting back to the first question

here

what constitutes a sexual misconduct in Buddhism I've answered this question in previous q a at least one and somewhere I don't remember exactly where it is there's just a list of women a man is not supposed to have sexual relations with and all of the lists I think it's 10 but all of them are women that are already like under the guardianship or protection of another man so it's like another man's wife obviously a woman who is betrothed you know she's engaged you know she's a woman who still lives with her parents so if she's under the protection of her father or a guardian a woman who's under the

protection of a guardian like another
man's slave girl a woman who is a
prisoner who's under the like the
guardianship of the prison guards
or the what do you what do you call them
the the main guy at the prison
the words escaping me I have never been
to prison so
um so that's kind of like
that's like the the commentarial
interpretation I'm pretty sure of sexual
misconduct but I mean it would also
include
uh like having sex with a prostitute you
know she's under the protection of her
pimp or whatever but even a free agent

prostitute would be sexual misconduct if you're having this promiscuous sex with people you don't care about people that don't care about you that would qualify a sexual misconduct so sexual intercourse that isn't sexual misconduct would be essentially two people uh preferably who love each other or at least they have like this sense of Duty you know they have this Bond and they're not messing around with other people on the side you know they're just with each other and you know they're they're monogamous essentially so that would be that would not be sexual misconduct if if they fit that so you don't have to be married but at

least you have to be you know

in a in a stable faithful pair bond with
another person

so I'll just move on with uh

librarian crazies next and last question
here

and he says I gotta chuckle when you
said you smashed those flies and feed
them to the ants did you have to do
Penance after doing it as a layperson
now do you still follow the five
precepts the no killing insects part is
probably the hardest precept to follow
for me

well technically I wasn't feeling ants I
was feeding ant lions and if you if you

never lived in like a dry deserty place
an ant lion it's a kind of insect larva
or nymph that lives in the sand and it
makes this funnel-shaped pit and
anything that falls into the pit it like
flings sand at them mostly ants until
they fall down to the bottom and it
grabs them in his jaws and eats them
um but that's kind of irrelevant here do
you have to do Penance after killing an
insect

um no you have to make confession so
it's it's a party offense to kill an
animal is a pachy the offense and so you
just make confession and that kind of I
mean you still got the karma but at
least uh from the ecclesiastical point

of view you're you're clear you know
you're you're in good standing you you
confess the offense you know you promise
to to do better in future that you just
restrain yourself in future
and so that's fine and
um for those of you that didn't see the
previous q a where I was talking about
this I mean it's ironic that when I was
trying to be as serious and strict of
among as possible I was living out in
this big forest in tropical Asia with no
mosquito net and just out there in the
open
and
when mosquitoes I mean within reason I

could just sit there and be bitten by mosquitoes and there were times when there'd be like six of them biting me at the same time but there were these horse flies and sand flies that would come and start I mean the sand flies would just come in swarms and it was scary because they bite hard it hurts and I just could not sit there and just be eaten alive by these things and so I just started flailing back at them and I I got pretty good at slapping them with my sweat wiping rag and uh then you know they'd be dead or stunned or whatever and then I'd drop them into a little ant lion pit at least get a little bit of Merit for feeding hungry ant lion

but um let's see as a layperson now do I still follow the five precepts I do have a beer every now and then I had a beer last night in fact I had two of them so

I don't follow the five precepts perfectly with regard to lying I am scrupulous I do try to be honest I don't steal with regard to killing uh yeah I have killed a few insects I haven't killed anything bigger than an insect

but um

I have killed a few insects I killed probably lots of them accidentally today when I was tearing apart the chicken

coop because there was a couple of ant
nests inside the chicken coop

but um it has to be on purpose in order
for it to count I suppose

so let's see

yeah

so yeah I think I answered that one so
we'll just move on to the next question

from hey it's Tig

and hey it's TIG says what was we no

what there's no age what was we and I

asked him after he asked me this I mean

could he be a little more specific and

then he admitted that he just wanted to

hear me say we was Kings and [_]

so

there there it is and I said

actually we was arya's

we was Aryans and [_]

I think I'll just move on this question

here also from Hayes TIG is there Merit

in being hit in the head by a horse

likewise is there Merit in being chopped

in the head by a Matic and apparently he

read a blog post that I wrote talking

about my father's paranormal childhood

and when he was about eight he got

kicked in the head by a horse apparently

according to the story he was trying to

climb onto the horse by climbing up its

tail and it kicked him in the head

fortunately it had thrown a shoe and

kicked him without a horseshoe on

otherwise he might have done

and then uh

and then just a year later he got

chopped in the head with a Matic and it

caused another fracture so he got his

head broken twice when he was a kid

um is there Merit in being hit in the

head by a horse well like I just

mentioned I mean there must have been

some mitigating Merit in that he just

happened to get kicked by the hoof that

didn't have a shoe on it no iron shoe

you know sort of like me talking earlier

about uh breaking my teeth and getting

malaria and so forth

um it may have helped him later in life

with regard to understanding

um like Paranormal phenomena what he referred to as the occult

I mean that may have kind of been a kind of initiation you know sort of creating a certain liminality by

um breaking his head

um yeah so it's hard to say because

there's very rarely anything that

happens to you there's 100 good or 100

bad it's almost always a mix it's almost

always Shades of Gray

so yeah I would I would assume that

there was a certain amount of Merit

involved

in in these things although

pretty obviously there was a lot of

demerit also

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from Trump

and Trump is says if nibana is off the

scale and unconditioned then how do

conditioned mind States and actions I.E

kusula Deeds lead onward to Awakening

that's a good question

and I wish I had something to drink but

I don't have anything to drink I just

I like drinking stuff

not alcohol I don't drink alcohol not

even not even beer on these

but um let's see yeah it's it reminds me

of a statement by Krishna learning and

you can see similar things in the

polytext themselves for example in uh

the polytext like in the sunny patana
suta you know say if you follow these
instructions scrupulously then you'll
either become enlightened or you'll
become an Arya that's you know not
enlightened but close to enlightened and
so there's no guarantee and that that
reminded me of of Jay krishnamurti's uh
statement that you can open the window
but you can't cause the breeze to blow
in now you open you know you get your
room you know squared away get it clean
and everything so that you can get to
the window and open it but that's that's
the most you can do
so I mean there is no guarantee and it's

Enlightenment itself is a paradox and
like I said earlier within the the
context of samsara

that it may just be meaningless it may
just be impossible or just uh just
meaningless

so what you do is you just get yourself
as open to it as possible you know get
yourself cleared out and and

um

usually in the text or in a lot of sutos
you know you're getting into high
mystical states that are getting you
into some kind of worldly approximation
of Enlightenment in fact Jonah is
referred to as temporary Enlightenment
or temporary Liberation I should say

and um

the way it's really hard to talk about
this talking about Enlightenment and so
forth is just like I said from a some
sort of context it may just be futile
laughs

but it's like

um you know seeing water instead of
waves and so if you wanted to see like
the surface of the water has just water
and not as getting distracted by the
waves you know you're just seeing it as
waves that's that's what the Normie does
I mean I'm speaking allegorically here
or metaphorically but people most people
they see only the waves they don't see

the essence they just see the forms
and so if you're going to get to the
point where you see the essence of of
the world and not just the superficial
forms you're going to have to see the
water as water and not as waves and I
like this wave and I don't like this
wave and that wave is better than this
other wave and then on and on that's
that's the world that most people live
in is just superficial forms
so the way you do that is you try to
create as much of a flat Palm as
possible like something like fourth
genre would just be flat palm and then
it's very difficult to confuse that
confuse the water with the waves because

there aren't any waves anymore it may be
absolutely impossible to get to just
purely perfect flat calm there may
always be a certain amount of you know
little ripples or something
but the the less the waves are there to
distract you the more you're able to
penetrate that and sort of transcend the
superficiality of the forms and get to
the essence

so that would be how I would uh answer
that question I'll just move on to Trump
a Saba's next question here
which is how does orthodox Buddhism
explain how the mind can be reborn in a
lower state for example a human goes

down into the animal and becomes a bird
during rebirth the bird arguably does
not have volition in the same manner as
does a human yet rebirth is discussed in
a one-to-one Exchange in any sutas how
then can one reborn into an animal like
a bird burn off negative karma of a
human life while a bird does and not
have ability to choose kusala or akusala
actions

okay

um there's kind of a lot to unpack I
mean I'm I'm kind of like wanting to go
One Direction with this which really
isn't the direction that Trump basantva
here was had in mind I'm pretty sure but
uh my father who was a weird guy partly

because he had his head broken a number of times cleaned twice when he was a little kid

um he was introduced to Buddhism by a dead Vietnamese Buddhist monk who was coming through a spirit medium in trance so she channeled this dead Vietnamese Mahayana Buddhist monk and my father learned about Buddhism originally in this way

and he asked this this monk or you know the woman in the trance anyhow that can a person be reborn as an animal and the the dead monk was just he just scoffed at the idea how could you fit all the Karma of a human being into a bug or or

a bird or a goldfish or something it
just I mean you just can't fit

he was just indignant according to my
father's recounting of the story

but um

that's not the question here it's like
uh see

uh let's see here's the actual question
here

how can one be reborn into an animal
like a bird burn off negative Karma of a
human life well well the thing is you're
they're just stuck you know there's the
famous sutta where the Buddha is talking
about how if you wind up born as an
animal

then your ability to get out of the

animal realm is is very small so the the
analogy is you've got a blind sea turtle
who comes up once every hundred years he
swims all the oceans of the earth and he
comes up once every hundred years for
air

and you've got like this a yoke which is
let's say a toilet seat it's sort of
shaped in kind of the same size as a
toilet seat

it's floating out in the ocean and he
said the the chances of getting out of
the animal realm once you wind up there
or about the same as that blind sea
turtle coming up for air and having his
head come right up through the Yoke or

in this my version the toilet seat
so you're stuck there because As Trump
asaga points out your your ability to
get out of there through volitional good
deeds and earning Merit and like
understanding and contemplating dhamma
and so forth you know it's pretty much
gone

so you just have to exhaust your Bad
Karma even though as an animal you're
stuck making more and more of it
you somehow I have to exhaust that and
then having like the the underlying
Merit from previous existences as humans
or even superhuman beings finally they
they lift you out of it or maybe in some
case you're just like this rare animal

you're the dolphin that helps the
drowning swimmer or something

so

so I think I answered the question
but it's it's not easy if you're if
you're reborn as an animal maybe you'll
be lucky and become like this pampered
I don't know Shih Tzu or something
and then you might have a better
opportunities you know you're not just
in you know like fear and hunger mode
all the time just trying to survive
so let's move on to Trump Assad for the
next question here do you consider
Buddhism in the west to be a lost cause
or is this just a bump in the road as

part of a longer process of transmission while there is a bunch of problems in the convert community in the past 20 to 30 years there has been a growth of monastic institutions in the west could it be that the leftist stuff will fade as the Boomers die off as gen Z is mostly not interested in their vision of liberal religion and the conservative Traditions like Orthodox teravada will continue to chug along as those Fall Away

yeah that's a timely question I suppose um yeah I mean Western Buddhism most western Buddhism is just has been taken over by

Liberation theology which is just a kind

of like

it's just this mishmash of like the
third or fourth wave feminism and lgbtq
rights and

um you know like environmentalism to
some degree and

um just sort of

um neo-marxism essentially progressivism
so it's just essentially so-called
progressivism as though decline in fall
is progress

um just putting on like a Buddhist cloak
and being called Buddhists and you know
the followers of this ideology being
called calling themselves Buddhists
um but at the same time I think as uh

Trump assafa here points out
um Buddhist monasticism like taravada
Buddhist monasticism is on the increase
in the West
and the monks tend to be way more
conservative than the the Jewish
lesbians teaching gamma in the dhamma
halls for Lay people in various places
so
um yeah I think
there is a very good chance that the
whole Progressive Movement is becoming
so unstable and insane that it's going
to collapse sooner or later preferably
sooner than later
and um the the conservative aspects of
terrible Buddhism because they have a

much firmer Foundation but not based on
fads that became popular around 2015
you know they've been there for 2 500
years and

um so it's it's sort of like a rock
even though it's it's like a smaller
movement right now than all the the
progressive Lefty cultural Marxist
Buddhism stuff

um I mean you read the academic papers
like Buddhist Buddhist academic papers
and it's all you know about lgbtq stuff
I mean that's that's seems to be like a
major thread in buddhistic studies
nowadays is you know how can we justify
you know

like transgenderism you know using
Buddhism that kind of thing
so yeah I would be inclined to think
that uh that the whole Progressive
Movement

um in its appropriation of Buddhism and
pretty much every other spiritual system
that they can get their hands on and
just turning it into
sort of you know religion flavored
cultural Marxism or whatever that it's
it's not stable
it's not going to last and that there's
always going to be
um like the more solid more stable kind
of

Buddhism that uh it's not going to die

out nearly as easily

but who knows we're just gonna have to
wait and see exactly what's going to
happen

so yeah let's just wait and see I'll

just move on to Trump assafa's next

question here a follow-up to this

question how does Buddhism or does it at

all explain how one can see the future

if a person can lessen or alter their

karmic retributions

see anguli Mala getting a beat down

after becoming an aura hunt versus being

killed by his victim's relatives are

there any explanations of how an Arya

sees into the future differently from a

worldly person well again this is one of those questions that I don't fully entirely grasp how can Buddhism see into the future I mean from the Orthodox terravada Buddhist perspective nobody can see into the future because the future simply does not exist yet so when the Buddha makes prophecies and supposedly you know seemingly sees into the future he's using his omniscient ability to see the way things are now and then he's just extrapolating with with his superhuman genius and extrapolating into the future um but that's not exactly the same as actually seeing the future so I mean prophecy in that sense I mean

in the the Paranormal sense really
doesn't exist unless you want to
consider the omniscience of a Buddha to
be paranormal I guess that would that
would be applicable

um

how a person can lessen or alter their
comic retributions

um yeah I mean if you're if you're
enlightened then I mean like for example
there's the story of Muhammad galana he
was one of the Two Chief Disciples of
the Buddha

and he was the disciple of the great
Disciples of the Buddha he was the one
who had mastered

psychic powers more than any other and
um because he was so illustrious and
such a good example there were certain
non-budists who hated him
and so they hired some thugs to
essentially kill him you know like just
assassinate him to just murder him and
he used the psychic powers to escape
twice you know he could just fly away or
whatever but then he realized that he
had the karma to be killed because in
some previous life he had I can't
remember the story like it's like he
deliberately caused the death of one or
both of his parents or something it was
really awful it was a long time ago but
that Karma never it had never completely

worked itself out yet and so finally the third time he just let them literally beat him to a pulp according to the the story there was not an unbroken bone left in his body after they were done beating on him

um with regard to anguli Mala who was literally a serial killer

um he uh was converted by the Buddha and became a monk and then apparently became enlightened

um and then uh he got he got a beat down but at least he didn't get the he wasn't beaten to a pulp like uh mogulano was but mogalana was a chief disciple so see are there any explanations of how

an aria season the future differently
from a worldly person well I mean if
you've got psychic powers you you know
you've got Clairvoyance and so forth and
then that would help you to extrapolate
into the future you'd see more of the
big picture

than the average person and the Buddha
who's supposedly I mean according to
Orthodox tradition is omniscient then he
can see the big picture and Crystal
Clarity and uh you know he can
extrapolate even better but we've got
limited knowledge

the average Normie has limited knowledge
so I mean you can make guesses about the
future but you can't know for sure

so yeah even even in Aura hot really
cannot know for sure kind of reminds me
of was it in the Book of Revelation the
Bible where even the even the angels
don't know when uh the day of judgment
is going to occur

so let's see here

I'm not sure if I answered that question
very well but I gave it a shot
so I'm just going to move on to the next
question

which is from our good friend Theo Vox
and sipad zidana

and I still don't know if I'm
pronouncing that name correctly but it
just rolls off the tongue now

and see olvox and sipad zidana says can
you please explain Tantra what are its
Origins teachings why it's influent why
it's influenced many modern Indian
religions and what's up with the whole
tantric sex thing

I had to learn about Tantra when I took
out religions of India class in college
long ago and I'm not sure

what the origins of it are with regard
to was it originally like Mahayana

Buddhist or was it Hindu I know that the
Hindus and the Mahayana Buddhists have
like tantric practices in certain

schools but I'm not sure which one it
arose with and which one borrowed it but
the whole idea of Tantra is that we are

in the Kali Yuga and you just can't
become a saint anymore the the times are
just too decadent too depraved you know
too much on the downhill slide for
people to really perfect themselves the
way Orthodox and Buddhism or Orthodox
whatever encourages people to do you
know since very ancient times and so
what they try to do
is they just try to detach they're like
trying to use like Vice essentially as
just like a spiritual practice you know
they do
um like immoral things supposedly or at
least Spirits religiously disapproved of
things

um as a kind of spiritual practice
because we are in the Kali Yuga and
there's no escape from these spiritually
inappropriate actions and so in Tantra
I've read
that there are like the five M's that
they would use ritually
um as a kind of spiritual practice one
was my tuna which is sex one is Maja
which is alcohol this intoxicants in
general I think it's mainly alcohol one
is mamsa which is meat one is matcha
which is fish so they eat meat and they
eat fish they drink alcohol they have
sex and the fifth one they've I think
they've lost what it is they're sort of
like Soma in in uh in in The Vedas where

um they just kind of lost the meaning of
it it's probably some kind of drug
but um it's in the the ceremonies that
they do now is they just use parched
grain and I'm not sure how parched grain
would be something spiritually
disapproved of unless it's just some
sort of obscure food taboo
um and they would try to they try to do
these things mindfully without
attachment even the sex part so like
tantric sex I have read I think ramdas
describes it to some degree in at least
one of his books the man lies motionless
on his back and a female who has been
trained to have sex without any kind of

emotional involvement like a lot of
women kind of do anyway I guess
um that she's sort of rides him and he's
just trying to be there just like as
unattached and mindful as possible just
lying there on his back while the girl
kind of rides him
um and the whole point of it is that if
you can't escape from this kind of
worldly defilement stuff in this Dark
Age that we are living in you have to
transmute that into into something
spiritual so it's like they're trying to
transmute the darkness of the Dark Age
that we are in into something spiritual
so they can use at least that as a
vehicle to Enlighten them

and it's very dangerous and even the
tantric people uh like the the genuine
ones not just the ones playing at it you
know they'll tell you it really is
dangerous because you can just get lost
in it I mean it takes a lot of
self-discipline to do these things
especially the sex thing without just
getting just getting lost in it
or just having it come back on you and
you're making more demerit than Merit or
or whatever it is
so let's see
why it's influenced many modern Indian
religions I assume it just goes it's the
the standard idea that we are in the

Kali Yuga and just becoming a saint is
so difficult

that there are a lot of like renunciants
who try as hard as they can to become
enlightened through the the standard
traditional practices and make
themselves a perfected Saint and then
they just fail and then they just switch
to something else like devotionism
like I guess at least some of the pure
land Buddhists were like that where they
tried to be a perfected Saint they
couldn't do it so they just started
praying

or um yeah probably Tantra is is the
same way I assume there's a lot of
people who are just sort of drawn to

rascality in general who are just intuitively drawn to trying to use their own rascality as a spiritual vehicle but I think I've answered that question so I think I'll just move on to seal of action cpl's next question here it's just kind of a long one in the Indian languages the word Jonna is used for concentration but samadhi just means meditation but in Buddhism I constantly hear people say the Buddha would say Jonah comes from jayadi which means meditation while they translate samadhi as concentration also I heard namarupa means mind body and Buddhism what it directly means name and form and was

used in the upanishads to refer to the process of perception where a form is given a classification in the mind this and some others have led to scholar monks like Bonte to claim that the terrible tradition lost the meaning of the words over time due to not knowing the language and lost their traditional context by being in a different culture meanwhile most Buddhist Scholars would say that the Buddha just used words to mean different things

what are your thoughts on this do you think terrible really lost the cultural context of even these important words or do you think this interpretation is a

stretch

okay well getting back to the top here

the word Jonna

I'm pretty sure it just means meditation

I mean it comes from jayadi which means

to blaze to illuminate

and um

I mean it also had a meaning of like

meditation like like genre is

um what the word zen comes from it's

like the meditation School of Buddhism

and I'm pretty sure that it means that

in other Indian traditions also samadhi

has a somewhat different meaning in

Hinduism where that's like the

attainment I mean like someone

um

I remember someone who was a follower of
Osho they were claiming that they
attained samadhi concentration
and that was like when you attain
somebody it's sort of like Ken show or
Satori in in like Zen

um so in Somali may have a different
meaning in Hinduism but I am pretty sure
that samadhi I mean just going with it's
like placing together to which
essentially is concentration literally
the psalm means together and the the D
is like placement

so yeah I I don't think that CEO of
action

or I I suspect that he is mistaken with

the guard too Jonah

in other systems or in like the original

uh means

um concentration

and samadhi just means meditation

yeah because I think somebody is

concentration and John I John originally

just met meditation and then later on it

acquired the meaning of like really

Advanced meditation

but I think originally it just meant

meditation like uh in in the Attica

Wagga which is very old it refers to uh

a meditating monk as ajayi or just a

meditator

he doesn't necessarily mean that he was

possessed of you know these higher
absorption States

so we're going to Nama Rupa I do agree
that uh I mean literally it means name
and form and it I think it originally
did mean that uh

that it was just uh the the way
perception Works where you single
something out you single out a form and
then you put a name on it
and then Buddhism turned that into mind
and matter and I'm not even sure that
the Buddha would have taught the reality
of physical matter

I mean he probably just was silent on
the issue because it's you just don't
get enlightened through philosophizing

in that way

ah so yeah I would agree with that

second part

and let's see this and some others have

led to scholar monks like Bonte punaji

to claim that the terravada tradition

lost the meaning of the words over time

due to not knowing the language and lost

their traditional context by being in a

different culture

um

the culture didn't change all that much

I do think that certain words

um they just lost they forgot the

meaning the original meaning like one

classic example is the word papancha

which uh was misunderstood by the
commentarial tradition for centuries and
centuries until finally uh Sri Lankan
monk in modern times back in the 20th
century wrote a book Concept in reality
I think I got on the Shelf back there
pointing out just based on what the
students say about the word papancha
that it really doesn't mean what the
commentary says it does
so that happens and then when Mahayana
came along and started translating texts
into Sanskrit or a Buddhist hybrid
Sanskrit they they really misunderstood
the meanings of quite a few words in
fact they may have misunderstood the
meaning ironically of the word

bodhisattva or bodhisatta in Pali
um another one is um the the
conventional truth in Buddhism is Samuri
Sacha they've they translate that as
some verti Sacha which means concealing
truth so they they sort of redefined it
on purpose or else they just
mistranslated into Sanskrit
um it is true that the Buddha would
change the meanings of certain words
like Karma and he's got a different
explanation for karma than other systems
um the word Brahman he's just started
using that as a genuine holy man not
just someone who was descended from this
you know ancient Line This certain cast

or Varna

so yeah I think it's probably a a

mixture of

um

just the meanings changing

um partly because the Buddha just

started using them in a different

context or with a different meaning and

also when you've got scholar monks

they're writing most of the books I mean

the real meditators the serious monks

are out alone out in a cave somewhere

they're not participating in these

councils and so forth as a general rule

they're not determining what the Dogma

the Orthodox position is going to be

they're not writing commentaries

so

um there is a certain amount of

um this deviation like uh what would you

call it entropy in in dama where just

things kind of start breaking down a

little bit

ultimately they break down a lot like

modern Western so-called Buddhism I mean

I mean that's it's almost unrecognizable

compared with what Buddhism originally

was

but um

yeah anything is I mean everything is

impermanent everything that has a

beginning has an end and that includes

the teachings of the Buddha

so

yeah so I mean here's the question what
do you do you think terrebona really
lost the cultural context of even these
important words

or do you think this interpretation is a
stretch I think to some degree it's one
to some degree it's another I mean I do
think that Jonah was misinterpreted but
I do think it originally did just mean
meditation and the four Johns were
originally just the four stages of
meditation

so that even a normie who's meditating
correctly would have first genre or
you're still thinking and so forth
and then it somehow got turned into a

superhuman mental state so that now in
terrible lot of Buddhism right
concentration is literally a superhuman
mental state and my battery is dying
because I forgot to plug it in again
just a second

it keeps happening

I think it happened last time too

all right we're good we're good

that was down to 10 percent

okay

so yeah I mean there's there's no Escape
really and uh you know everything that
has a beginning does have an end
and uh so Buddhism is in a certain
amount of decline

I mean an obvious decline if you look at
you know what post-modern western
Buddhism has become
so let's see here I think I'll just move
on to CEO of actions next question
ah and this one is a real personal one
have you ever experienced any of the
genres or arupa ayatanas if so can you
describe them in any way that the
suitors don't also have you had the
glimpse of nibana I know you believe in
the four path oh I know you maybe he
says don't believe in the four path
model but I don't know if you also don't
think you can't get a glimpse before
full enlightenment
okay well

with regard to the formless genres or
the uh what he calls here the arupa
ayatanas I did write an essay which I
think is still on my my languishing
website

um

trying to explain that those were it's
like an anachronism those got added
later

and I won't go into the full Theory here
but uh I do think that those are like an
anachronism that

um they just got added later they're
just sort of uh

uh just sort of an artificial construct
or something

but with regarding the genres I mean
like I just said earlier just just like
a minute or two ago that John originally
just meant meditation and that there are
four stages of meditation and so I mean
if you're just meditating correctly then
you've already got first Jonna
even though you're you're still got
you're going with a mantra or breathing
in breathing out or whatever
um

but I do think just um based on my own
personal experience I do get higher than
first John I don't really want to go
into
details of that but I have definitely
gone into meditative states where you're

just not thinking anymore you're just
wide awake and your mind is silent
um if you want to call that a glimpse of
nibana again I mean you have to use
language to talk about this stuff but
again it may be from a samsara context
that nibana is just meaningless
just using words and so forth I mean you
can say that nibana is the cessation of
dukkah the cessation of delusion or the
cessation of greed and hate and so forth
but um
yeah I mean it may just be ultimately
just so beyond language that you just
can't even talk about it
and it's best not to think about being

an aria anyone who thinks I am an aria
isn't one

I mean that's that's going back to The
Diamond Cutter Sutra again I think I've
already mentioned The Diamond Cutter
once but it points out that anyone who
is in Arya isn't going to be thinking I
am an aria because self-view is one of
the first things that goes when you
become an Arya you don't believe I am
this or I am anything really and it's
but it's just not even when you start
believing that you're you're something
you've pretty much locked yourself into
this category and it may not even be the
correct category
so I'm just going to move on to the next

question here from CEO of actions
and that is what are your thoughts on
the wimuti Maga and uh yeah I have come
across one copy of the wimuti Maga I was
at a monastery in Upper Burma and in
their Library they had a copy of the
wimuti Maga

and that was what the wisudi manga was
based on it was a earlier
um an earlier commentarial work
that existed in ancient times and it was
believed to be lost for a long time and
then finally they found like one copy of
it in some palm leaf manuscript and some
old Monastery in Sri Lanka or something
and it's it's like a an earlier version

of the wisudi manga and I just read parts of it I didn't go over the whole thing there are obvious resemblances and certain differences I think possibly but just because Orthodox terabad and Dogma had changed to some degree some of the wimuti Maga was now considered to be unorthodox and then got revised and improved upon by Buddha Gosa who wrote the wizuni manga but um pretty obviously had a copy of the wimuti Maga to refer to and he was just sort of modifying that to make the wisudi manga and for those of you who don't know what the wisudi Maga is it is the primary commentarial text in terrible Buddhism

it's sort of like the Hub and all the commentaries to the different texts or like the the spokes coming out of the Hub but like the wee City magas just like the center of the commentarial tradition

and the wimuti Maga apparently was its predecessor although I can't really say a whole lot about it because I was just sort of skimming through it just out of curiosity to see uh you know what the what the translator would say and and and that sort of thing

so we'll just move on to the next question

also from CEO of action sipad zidana

and he says

you said addiction is a result of deep down problems with perception and it's hard to quit because of it do you think that's also the case of starting a new habit rather than stopping for example if we want to meditate are there any tricks to getting ourselves go get stuff done or is it also just a matter of perception and there's no hope until a crisis incident

um

well I mean yeah if you want us it's hard to start a new habit just pretty much like it's hard to stop an old habit is because you're in the habit of not having that habit yet

so I mean obviously I mean you don't
just you can't just passively wait for
yourself to be flung into a crisis in
order to have the breakdown necessary to
transcend your attachments or or
whatever

um

so let's see do you think this whole
yeah I think yeah because you've already
got these habits and it doesn't include
the new habit so yeah I mean I think
anybody's experienced that where
um you just you just habitually occupy
your time doing certain things you know
watching YouTube videos or or whatever
it is whatever it is that you do and

they're just starting a new habit like I would like to start reading books more just because I just kind of got out of the Habit after I stopped being a monk and stop being a member of the Leisure Class I have to work for a living and do chores like tearing down chicken coops and stuff

and you just get into this I mean he's not in your routine anymore so you have to just alter consciously alter your routine but obviously if you have a good motivation for it then yeah I mean that's that's really essential you have to have like a like a clear motivation you know a good reason to start doing something if it's just sort of like this

arbitrary whim it's not gonna not gonna
last very long unless uh the arbitrary
of whim you know leads to something more
solid

but uh yeah you have to have some sort
of perception like

um schopenhauer his his doctoral thesis
in University his first main uh
philosophical essay had a name like on
the four-fold route of sufficient reason
and he said that one of the the
uh the four

uh kinds of like necessity is like
psychological necessity and that is so
long as you perceive things in the same
way you're going to react in the same

way to whatever happens the only way
you're going to change your behavior
under the same circumstances is to
change your perceptions
so there's that too and if
it may be that you need to change your
perceptions to some degree by studying
up on the benefits of this new habit you
want to start for example
you know once you you like educate
yourself on the benefits of it that may
change your perceptions sufficiently
that you don't need like the total
breakdown
to throw you into the crisis that makes
you open to suggestion
so getting any tricks to getting

ourselves to go get stuff done some

people meditate better in a group

I mean you're much less likely to just
get up and wander away after 15 minutes
if everyone around you is still sitting
there so some people do better in a
group although you'd have to find a
meditation group that uh isn't teaching
something that you don't consider to be
acceptable

so that's a possibility or uh really

just uh read some of the texts

encouraging

meditation read some books on meditation

like written by a serious meditator that

is telling you from his own experience

you know you're going to get these kind of benefits

and then it may inspire you to meditate more

so um I think I'm just going to move on to the next question also from CEO of action Cod is either now this this may turn into a really long one even if I uh don't include the really complicated question in this particular video didn't I mentioned earlier so let's see here

next one is when I read ancient texts like the law of Manu it has a rule that you shouldn't marry your son to a girl with red hair also there is some Mayana story I read where the student had to

get the guru a wife and he got her a
Brahmin Girl with blonde hair although
she rejected him for his student did the
original Aryans who invaded India have
these features or were these a result of
later migrations

where are all these people with these
features we would consider modern

European in India today did they all die
out

well

um I've been thinking about that like uh
you had the indo-europeans who moved
um like they moved Eastward from their
Homeland supposedly going with the the
main Theory you know the most accepted

Theory they arose like in South
Southwestern Russia and Southern Ukraine
like north of
uh the Black Sea like the pontic step is
where they arose and that was
um we don't get we don't need to get
before them but that was for the
Indo-European or the so-called Aryan
race arose and then uh one group of
those migrated
um
eastwards they became the centashta
culture and then like the Andra Novo
culture some of those then migrated
cells into what is now Afghanistan
and
then they started the bactria margiana

archaeological complex or something like that and

I mean as they as they migrated they were no doubt interbreeding with other people there especially if they're coming as conquerors they're going to be taking the prettiest women and interbreeding with those which is going to be you know sort of um hybridizing the people as they move into one area after another

um

how many blondes and redheads and blue-eyed people were still among the the Indo-European like the the indo-aryans when they invaded India

still going with the standard theory
that might be uh insulting some Hindus
who think the Aryan race or the
Indo-European race arose in India I was
saying gajillion years ago or whatever
um yeah I I think there were still some
blondes and redheads and blue eyed
people there I think you can still find
like higher cast Indians who still have
blue eyes they almost all have black
hair now

um but you still find a lot especially
in the upper classes like the brahmins
especially if they've got like fair skin
and a few have blue eyes

um so a lot of that would go back to

um the indo-aryans who invaded India like

around 1500 BC or so but then there were other Indo-European groups that did invade after that one of the most recent of course being the British like in the 17 1800s

and there are you know British soldiers would mess around with Indian girls and um so you've got you know Indian people who are like half Irish living in India now

um so yeah you had like various tribes coming through conquering Northern India especially and the incidence of you know blonde people and blue-eyed people and and so forth would be much higher in the north than in the South the south is

mostly dravidian and I think there's
going to be a question about dravidians
later

um very nice question in fact

so some of it I assume goes back to the
indoorians I think it's in uh

um

what is it patanjali in his his yoga

sutras refers to like the standard

Brahman the stereotypical brahmanas

having like reddish hair and blue eyes

so in very early times it was like that

and then it was just through

interbreeding with the the indigenous

people there you know just over over

centuries and centuries you know you

have the indo-aryan ruling ruling class

you know it's it's accepting you know
they're they're taking you know women
from
from the other other races or you know
the people that were already there
um also sometimes they would especially
the the shatrias or the like the the
military ruling class they would
sometimes just accept indigenous tribal
Chieftains as honorary
shatrias and there are some people who
say that the Buddha may have been of
that sort where he wasn't even into
Aryan although
um that's uh neither here nor there I
suppose but um yeah so it was gradually

they just kind of diluted out I mean
they're still their bloodline is still
there

that uh some of the purest purest
indo-aryan or Indo-European blood I have
read at least with this with regard to
certain genomes is in like Rajasthan in
Northern India that in like in like
dramatic like northern Europe those
would be the two main places or so I
have read

so

so yeah the original orange I assumed
that even by the time they got to India
there was probably mostly black hair and
dark eyes just because of all the
interbreeding that they did from between

their Homeland and India because they
they invaded

um and sort of took over I guess just
various cultures on their way there

and so each time you know they'd be

taking the prettiest girls of the the

black-haired dark-eyed people

they were already there and so gradually

they're sort of diluted down

it's uh my best answer

I think I'll just move on to seal of

action sipad zidino's next question

and that is also I read the the

dravidians are descendants from the

Middle East or Iran that arrived into

the Indus Valley around

3500 BC or so however there was an ancient hunter-gatherer population in India before then that some claim are some of the first people who came out of Africa which one of these do you think are responsible for the Ramana traditions I heard you say that it comes from the indigenous population but you called them dravidian so it's confusing well I've read that uh just based on the study of skeletons um in like cemeteries associated with the Indus Valley Civilization that the people there were a mixture of three different races you had the you know the uh the uh like the Mediterranean Neolithic Farmers from they were like

sort of cotton black-haired Caucasians
that came from you know essentially you
know where the where the Neolithic
Farmers arose like in uh
um like the Levant and Mesopotamia and
like South
Southeastern turkey that you know they
some of those I mean they spread out a
lot you know they spread all through
Europe and Neco as far as India and then
they started interbreeding with the
proto-australoids who were the first
Homo sapiens inhabitants of India and
Southeast Asia and they eventually got
to Australia and then they mostly uh
died out or got blended into other

populations elsewhere and they just
because Australia was so isolated they
still stayed you know relatively pure
australoid

in in in in Australia but uh so there
was like a mixture of these

um

uh Neolithic

agriculturalists who Moved In from from
the West you had the the protocol

Australians that were already there and
then you had like like a more Eastern

Asian uh ethnicity they were all kind of
mixing together in this Indus Valley
Civilization

and that was the origin of the shromana
tradition is whoever was running the

indoor the Indo uh the Indus Valley
Civilization

which as I say was um According to some
book that I read was a combination of
three different main ethnicities and I
assume the dravidians were mainly these
Neolithic agriculturalist Caucasians who
were interbreeding and to some degree
mixing with the proto-australoids they
were already in India at the time
and it's more dravidian the farther
south you go
in India
so that's my best answer to that
question so I move on to CEO of actions
next question which is why do you think

the original Mula sarvasti Vada and
Dharma guptica philosophical teachings
died out despite their monasteries
living on and were replaced with
Mahayana teachings also what is the
relations between the Mahayana and the
mahasan geeka I heard things like the
bodhisattva idea originated in later
sarvasti Vada traditions and was
rejected by mulas mahasan geeka so it's
pretty confusing how Mahayana came about
in general well Mahayana was kind of a
progressive movement and it I think it
was sort of a combination of different
things like the Progressive Movement
nowadays it's it's a combination of
these different strands you know you got

feminist lgbtq people some of whom are
at odds with each other

um you know just sort of the the racial
equality people that you know they want
to get do away with math and so forth
because some ethnicities don't do so
well in that regard get get rid of uh
University entrance exams and just go
with the assumption that everybody's
equal which

doesn't work or it's it's not going to
work in the long run

um

so I think Mahayana started the same way
like two of the earliest strands of
Mahayana or so I have read were pure

land which arose according to the book I
read it was uh uh Waters Indian Buddhism
I got on the bookshelf back there that
arose mainly in the South and in farther
north you had sort of the uh the prajna
paramita

the that that movement and there's
probably other factors also involved and
I'm just heard recently that uh
the mahayana branch of Buddhism
that was you know a little Buddhist
history about a hundred years after the
Buddha died there was the first major
Schism where you have the sthaviras or
the the theras who are the more
conservative in most respects split
apart from the mahasangha and ironically

the masanga was was a larger group and
it occupied mostly where the Buddha
originally lived
so like magada and so forth became
mostly Maha Sangha and they were more
Progressive they were more into
um emphasizing personal intuition and
inspiration rather than just
dogmatically adhering to texts so I mean
both sides have their good points and
bad points the the dogmatic side is is
going to be more conservative and less
likely to just Veer off into La La Land
whereas they're just going to be like
dry dogmatists with not as much
inspiration whereas the Mahayana

Buddhists you know they're going to be more inspired and this you're going to have the full spectrum because they're going to be going all over the place just from the ridiculous to the sublime and I have I heard recently or or read recently that the Maha Sangha were originally calling or at times they refer to themselves as the Mahayana so it could be that it was mainly a Maha Sangha movement but it was taking other other uh influence accepting other influences like I think the Mahayana abhi Dharma um or at least the main one that gets referred to the most often was the survosty modern version of it

so let's see

I think I need to read this question

again what do I think the original mules

of ostival and Dharma Gupta

philosophical teachings

um died out despite their monasteries of

living on and were replaced with

Mahayana teachings yeah I think is

largely just

um fashion trends just some older groups

sort of dying out I've I've read that

there is technically still cervosity

Vada monasteries in Japan around the

ancient capital of Nara

but they're mostly Mahayana now they're

called ritsu which literally means

um that's like the Japanese word for
Vinnie or monastic discipline and um so
they might have a little bit more of
these like cervosity Vaden elements than
most Mahayana but still it's it's mostly
just been drowned out just with Mahayana
because they were just surrounded by
sort of like

um you know you put the blonde
indoorians or the blonde haired
indoorians invading India and then
gradually they just and the blue eyes
just disappear because it's recessive
and dark eyes are or a dominant kind of
gene same way with Fair hair and dark
hair

so it's kind of along those lines I

suspect

the bodhisattva idea originated in
leadership

well I mean ultimately it goes all the
way back to teravada and pre-taravana
just with jataka stories and so forth
um just the the setting up of the Buddha
as higher than other enlightened beings
you know that maybe I'm I suspect that
originally the Buddha was just an aura
figure but then devotionism and
glorification of the founder made him
like way above any other enlightened
being even though their wisdom would be
the same because they would have zero
ego because they're enlightened

so you've got the stories of the
najokica stories of the Buddha and his
previous existences just existence after
existence after existence like
perfecting his paramies so that he can
be good enough to become a fully
enlightened Buddha and from that idea
you had this idea that it's more noble
and better to strive for being a Buddha
than to just content oneself of being an
ordinary enlightened being when
originally they may have been just the
same
and that the the glorification of the
Buddha was just a very human tendency to
glorify the founder of One's Own
tradition or glorify one's king or

leader it's just it's just a human it's
just human nature to do that sort of
thing I mean the Christians really took
the ball and ran ran with it they turned
the founder of their religion into God
almighty

so let's see

I guess I kind of answered that I'm at
least I've contributed some information
to the answer of that question

but uh I still have more more to go here

including more from Theo of action so

I'll just go on to his next question

here

in this video

um I'm not sure what video he's

referring to maybe the the previous q a
in this video you said only the four
genres are original and that the arupa
ayatana were probably just added later
on as more genres yeah I mentioned that
earlier

these seem to have come from pre-bootest
tradition and I heard you can go into
these arupas without the first four
genres with Casino

Brahma wehara techniques and removing
things like all buildings then trees
around you Etc I have heard some people
say that the Buddha probably developed
before Janos himself
while the way arupa's
while the way arupa's before the Buddha

were they were reached with those
visualization techniques what are your
thoughts on this Theory well I told you
that I have my own theory on the origin
of the the uh the four uh formless
genres or the four arupa ayatana and I
do have that in uh I think it's on my
website

um it's uh

an appendix to a different essay so it
might not it's the one about tarot cards
and um

tarot cards and astrology and so forth
it's an appendix to that essay is giving
my theory on the origin of the arupa
janas and um I think that they were

different ways of explaining
enlightenment
and

um when they finally hammered down the
Orthodox position of terravonna Buddhism
they couldn't accept these unorthodox
explanations of Enlightenment but they
didn't want to just reject them just out
of hand because they were too well known
to just ignore them and so they
relegated them to the highest possible
contemplative States like the realm of
infinite Consciousness there are at
least two sutas that pretty obviously
referred to nibana as infinite
Consciousness one in the Diga nikaya one
in the Maj minikaya and that became

unorthodox the commentarial tradition
says no it's not really describing
nibana although it pretty obviously is
and so strangely they're not even
calling it The the realm of infinite
Consciousness which they could have
easily done but um so it's the realm of
nothingness there there are sutas where
like in uh the parietana Wagga of the
city of the Buddha is saying you know
just just contemplate on there is
nothing you know NADA NADA NADA of Saint
John of the Cross nothing and so you've
got the realm of nothingness and you
know some people to this day think that
nibana is really just nothingness so

um in ancient times apparently they
believe that also and so they didn't
accept that that's no longer Orthodox
you know it lost out in the competition
of darwinian competition of ideas and so
they got relegated into a an arupa Jana
so I don't think it's necessarily
pre-budistic the Arupa genres
well that's just my own Theory
if you're interested you can read the
the essay or the appendix to the essay
and so I'll just move on to CEO of
action C Pat Xena's last question here
also what about niroda samopadi where do
you think that came from it wasn't
something the pre-budists might have
known of either but I don't know

let's see nerodus

it's uh the cessation

the attainment association is literally

what nerota somopathy means and uh if I

remember correctly sometimes it's

expanded into

the attainment of cessation of

perception and feeling

which means your mind is just kind of

blank

and this is accessible apparently only

to extremely Advanced practitioners like

arahants and uh I think uh anagami's

according to Orthodox tradition and it's

above John and really the ancient

Indians I mean there's another version

of this nerota samapoli which is uh the
the signless conference the signless
concentration of mind which is uh
let's see animita cheetah samadhi
and um I mean that also is an example
that's it's described for example in the
the Lesser discourse on voidness in the
majikaya where it's like higher than
fourth genre it used to be that fourth
genre was the highest you can get then
they add the formless Realms and then
they add nerota samopody they add the
form the signless concentration of mind
and it's just this in my opinion this
Indian passion to just keep one up in
the ultimate you know it's like some
some uh upanishads I'm pretty sure at

least a few upon shots come up with a
higher ultimate than Brahman
it's like either they're you got
different schools competing with each
other and you've got one person saying
this is the ultimate and then this other
school will say no no there's this other
ultimate higher than that one that's not
really the ultimate we got this Higher
One that we attain you can't attain that
so you think that that second rate
ultimate is really the highest ultimate
or you just have these intellectual
Indian philosophers who just want to
break new ground they want to discover
something new even though in in

spirituality it's it's all been
discovered already
at least the essential stuff
so I think he wrote a samapid is another
one of those where it's uh
for for whatever reason somebody wants
to claim that there is you know a higher
state attainable than for the genre and
there's a number of different ways of
doing that you've got the Aruba genas
you've got this new rotissimophy you've
got the the signless concentration of
mine and so forth I mean it could be
that I'm just a cynic and I just don't
follow along out of the stubborn
perversion with you know the Glorious
truth of Orthodox terrible and Buddhism

but still I am a Westerner I have a
critical mind and sometimes I just look
at this stuff and I'll get into more of
this a little later and we're already
over two hours so this is this is a
monster of a q a

um but yeah I'm not entirely Orthodox I
just can't be entirely Orthodox I mean
when you come to believe something I'm
not the sort of person that can just
choose to believe something just because
other people believe it
or I think I ought to I'm not even I
think I ought to it's just like if you
don't think it's true you can't just
through some

force of will or something just start
thinking that it's true I mean you have
to have more evidence or something to
change your mind you can't just change
your mind without that

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from shroomo

and shroomo says

what is the karmic price across the

spectrum of divination

tarot reading astrology chart reading

crystals talismans piranha healing

channeling or Consulting a Channeler

demon summoning energy of vampirism of

Prana or ether

what is the karmic price across the

spectrum of this kind of stuff well

that's

that's a question isn't it

golly I mean some of it is is largely

it's neutral although in the I mean a

lot of Buddhist tanks several at least

that uh the Buddha is warning monks

against any kind of like divination

which includes astrology or or

Consulting a Channel or that sort of

thing I think the the siliconda of the

like the first third of the deganikaya

starts off with this stock explanation

of things that a good monk doesn't do

and that would include like astrology

here and uh Consulting channelers and

again it's like

like Omens and stuff monks aren't
supposed to give give a damn about
omen's prognostications anything like
that
some of this demon summoning I
I'm not sure if I've ever encountered
that in in the sutas any mention of it
um but obviously if you're summoning a
demon that's not good I mean that's
you're playing with fire there
energy vampirism again that's that's a
term that I've just recently come across
um so I'm I'm not exactly sure if that
is was even a thing in uh ancient
Northern India in the Buddhist time or
shortly after the buddhistan crystals
again that's like a new age thing I

assume I mean there's a mention of
crystals in the text but it's just with
regard to valuable gems that are
forbidden for monks to handle
uh talismans yeah amongst wouldn't
bother with that sort of thing
so yeah most of it like the like the
fortune telling part is irrelevant you
know it might be neutral it might not be
positively harmful but it's some sorry
it keeps you stuck in some sorrow so
that makes it something that a serious
monk or renunciant who is intent on
enlightenment on transcending some Sora
he just wouldn't pay any attention to
that kind of thing and some of it might

become positively like immoral like like
demon summoning or the energy vampirism
but it's not really mentioned in the
text

but um the karmic price across the
Spectrum well at the at the very least
the karmic price is that you just remain
distracted and

um

kind of stuck in some sorta longer and
with regard to something like demon some
summoning or energy vampirism where
you're like deliberately
harming or debilitating you know
reducing the benefit to another person
then that's going to come back on you
through karmic retribution

so it's either just a waste of time or
it's or it's something that's positively
malevolent that's going to come back on
you uh worse than just wasting time
so I'll just move on to next question

this is from dread

and Dred says

I have a question pertaining to the
Attica Wagga for a Future q a do you
believe that the state described in
stanza 13 of the discourse on quarrels
and contentions the 11th discourse it's
uh the kalahawi Water
and the state described in dubaya and
the Bahia
udana 110 are the same state they are

described very differently but both

appear to be the goal what is

interesting is they are a goal that can
be achieved in this life

okay so he's asking if I think that the
uh the strange zen-like statement

um in the kalahawi watasuta of the

atikawaga of the sutiny Pata and the

strange zen-like statements of the

Buddha to Bahia

the non-budist philosopher in udana 110

if they're describing the same thing so

um I happen to have

uh cut and pasted them here fortunately

I've done a translation of both of these

so the uh the the weird zen-like

statement in uh the kalahuta

my translation of it is

he has no perception of perception he

has no perception of non-perception he

is not without perception he has no

perception of void but one who has

attained thus form becomes void for

founded in perception is diversifying

designation

so I also have the poly here it's not

sunny

[Music]

and

it's I mean it's it's kind of

paradoxical I mean you have no

perception of perception you have no

perception of non-perception and you're

also not without perception and then
finally you're not we but
I rendered uh is sort of an educated
guess that he has no perception of void
so just you have no perception of what
is like Beyond perception
and then for one who has attained thus
form becomes void because someone is
asking him how does form become void
hence this is his answer and founded in
perception is diversifying designation
which includes the word punchem which is
one of those words I was mentioning
earlier that terrible Orthodox tradition
misunderstood for centuries and
centuries
so that is that's that's what the

Kalahari says and then

um

the uh

let's see where do I find it oh yeah

here's the instructions to Bahia

while they were standing in the street

and uh this Bahia just begs the Buddha

to to please teach him dhamma and the

Buddha is saying I'm going for alms this

is not the right time and Bahia says we

don't know when we're going to die

please tell me now so then the Buddha

says well then Bahia thus should you

train yourself in the scene there will

be only the scene in The Herd there will

be only the herd in the felt there will

be only the felt in the mentally sensed
there will be only the mentally sensed
just like this by yeah should you train
yourself and since Bahia in the scene
there will be only the scene in The Herd
there will be only the herd and the felt
there will be only the felt and in the
mentally sins there will be only the
mentally sensed from that you Maya are
not thereby and since Bahia you are not
thereby you buy ya are not therein and
since Bahia you are not therein you buy
you I have no here no Hereafter no
between the two just this is the end of
unease
so

I'm gonna scroll back up here and Dread

is asking if the no perception of
perception and so on is the same as what
I just told you and I mean obviously
even if they're not describing exactly
the same practice and I think they
probably are but in in different ways
you know obviously they're teaching you
what the mental state of an enlightened
being is going to be like

so

um in in the bio suit are you saying in
the scene only the scene and which means
that I mean
perception may be still there but it's
like vestigial it's it's like
neutralized because you're seeing the

sensory datum as I mean it's still the
sensory datum you're not processing it
to the extent of giving meaning to it
you're not interpreting it you're not
having a running commentary on it it's
just what it is and that's it
and because of that there is no thereby
which is sort of referring to like
causation of like keeping you like
wallowing in samsara and when there is
no thereby there is no therein which
means you're not in samsara anymore
because you're no longer clinging to it
my my
attributing significance
to this stuff that's just coming up as
as the fruition of your own past some

sorry Karma which is perpetuates some
sorrow

and then going back up to the kalahi
watasuta he has no perception of
perception he has no perception of
non-perception he is not without
perception he has no perception of void
um yeah again it's like form becomes
void because it's like you're no longer
clinging to it you're no longer feeding
your your stake in samsara so to speak
um so yeah I think it's essentially the
same state

it is kind of interesting though that in
the kalahawiwara suta the the person
that he's talking to then asks another

question is he asks if that state that the Buddha just described is the highest state attainable or if there's anything higher than that and then the Buddhist says

and I quote here indeed some intelligent ones here do declare that the highest purity of the spirit is to that extent but then some of them claiming to be Adept declare an attainment to which nothing that was taken up remains which I interpret to mean that there are some people that say you're not fully in line until after you die because you've still got this body and you I mean you still got this thinking mind that can't help but think and perceive things so just

neutralizing the perception isn't as good as just being dead when you just let go it is in poly and then the Buddhist goes on to say so having understood these to be dependent the sage and 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 so he's saying just wallowing in these kind of arguments is just more samsara that I mean just don't worry about it so yeah my answer to that question is yeah and so I'll move on to the next question

for this is from Mary spelled m-e-r-r-y
and Mary says You seem to have read most
of the sutas and commentaries so tell us
why quite some important sutras are in
the kudikanikaya and not in the four
main onesuta collections is there
somewhere in the text explanation for
how five nikayas was combined and what
criteria was used to combine them that's
a good question

um

for those of you familiar with the the
polysutas there are five nikayas you got
the deganikai which is the long
discourses the majima nikaya which is
the middle length discourses the sum
mutinikaya which is the connected

discourses which means they're organized under categories and then you got the anguter in nikaya which is the numbered discourses which is going with regard to numbers so the Buddha is talking about the four you know the four noble truths or whatever or the you know the the seven factors of Enlightenment maybe under the fours or the sevens respectively

so it's numbered and then finally in the in the some Uthah and the angular are usually short sutos and then you've got the kudika nikaya which is the small collection and that's just sort of a miscellaneous

it really is it contains some very old
taxes it also contains most of the
latest suit of material like the genicas
the Ghost Stories the Mansion stories
and so forth

um a lot of the legendary like the fairy
tale stuff is thrown into the kudika
nikaya and why some of the oldest
collections like the sutanipata are in
the kurikenikaya

um it may be that they were just so well
known as a distinct text that they were
just put there because it wouldn't make
much sense to try and put them in the uh
in other texts you'd have to break it
all up like in the I mean they're not
medium length they're relatively short

sutos so you have to put them in the the
uh the sub Mutiny guy which has
everything organized by category or the
numbered uh the angura nikaya where
they're organized by number and it
probably wouldn't fit the anguro very
well because there's not much mention of
lists of numbered things in the but if
you're going to divide if you're gonna
kind of put them under the submitted
nikaya then you have to split up this
this already well-known body of texts in
order to put them under different
categories
and sell rather than do that I assume
they just put it as its own individual

text because it was so well known for
very ancient times probably before
um the editors like edited together
their jaitika and different schools of
Buddhism edited things differently like
a text that might be in the the Maji
manikaya in one like in Theravada might
be in like the some Uthar in in like the
Saravastiva lot of uh
so they were edited somewhat differently
and

um some of these texts came before that
like the sutras usually are the
Upanishads also it's one of the probably
the most translated best known terrible
Buddhist text and that's relatively late
it's a collection of aphorisms or it's

considered by Scholars to be relatively late that's also in the Korean nikaya um it's I think it just might be that you've got these well-known collections of texts that don't really fit well under other categories they just wind up by default or whatever in the in the Kaya so

let's see yeah it doesn't explain in the text how the five nikayas were combined different schools combine them somewhat differently although they're they're pretty much mostly similar they're more resemblance than other ones but the five nikayas were kind of an anachronism I

don't think there were five nikayas in the buddhistam that it was later maybe the even the First Council where they got together they started compiling things and organizing things and coming up with an orthodox system so I'll just move on to the next question here also from Mary also could you make a new playlist for archaic Buddhism videos it would be convenient if I make enough yeah I can do that but I've only done like three so far so it's not very many okay the next question from here that was easy I that was an easy answer I appreciate getting the the easy one getting cost a softball every once in a

while you know

next question from Mary is there

anywhere in the poly Canon description

of meditation positions like full Lotus

half Lotus Etc and which one is better

well that's kind of a good question I

mean it does say that amongst its

cross-legged

and it doesn't really say how he sits

cross-legged although it was traditional

for monk if he wasn't doing walking

meditation that I mean he was going to

be doing sitting meditation but it

doesn't as far as I can remember it

doesn't describe the exact posture like

the Asana the yoga Asana

but there is a strange rule for the
bikunis which can give some insight out
of that there's a linear rule for
bikunis which of course the modern new
bikinis aren't going to follow
but it is against the rules for bikuni
to sit cross-legged because according to
the text bikunis were consenting to the
touch of the heel
and the only full translation of the
winnia that I'm aware of is by IB Horner
who is this
Victorian kind of like lady scholar in
England long ago 100 years ago almost
and she had this this cute little
um footnote under this rule thing you
know the question is whose heel were

they consenting to the touch of and she thought they were sitting in the full Lotus and that somehow their heels were like sticking out and rubbing against the heels of of other non-sitting nearby which obviously she didn't understand how the the Lotus position works because I mean your heels are kind of dug into your own thighs when you're doing the Lotus position

so I understood what it meant because I used to know this girl I was kind of sweet on this girl in high school that um she told me that she learned how to masturbate as a little girl by sitting on her own heel and rocking back

and forth

and I assume that's what consenting to
the touch of the heel is

for why bikunis are not allowed to sit
cross-legged because

um there's they're they're like some of
them the naughty ones were like sitting
on their own heel and like enjoying the
contact and there's a bunch of rules
like that like they're not supposed to
stand facing the the current when
they're taking a bath in a river just
because the current is rubbing against
their PP or whatever and they're liking
it so

um

that would mean it would seem to imply

the the default sitting position or
sitting across like it would be what is
called the Burmese position or the easy
position which is your I don't know if I
can do this your legs are kind of like
this they're both kind of flat on the
floor you know one in front of the other
they're not like up in the full Lotus or
the half Lotus it's they're just both
like this

foreign

logical I'm using logic here using hip
thinkings to answer this question

okay next question from Mary another
personal one

he says I love you Ponyo and I'm not gay

it's weird do you think we have some
past life connection and I can say I've
had experiences like this where
um you meet some person you might not
even have really a whole lot in common
but there's just this chemistry that you
just love each other like brothers and
there's this has happened to me a number
of times in my life
you just you just meet someone you just
hit it off there's like for whatever
reason I mean you love this person like
a brother
and it's the feeling is mutual I mean it
goes both ways and it's not gay or
anything it's just brotherly love
and it's happened to me a number of

times and so I can relate to that and
there's a good good I mean from a
Buddhist point of view good chance that
we were friends in a past life maybe
even Brothers in a past life and that
it's just carrying over was harming
momentum into this life

so it's possible I mean I can't really
say I've never met him in Mary spelled
m-e-r-r-y and like in this life in
person

so I'll just move on to the next
question

also from Mary

as Buddhists aren't we supposed to love
everybody isn't that the definition of

meta well as Buddhists yeah we are
supposed to love everybody or at least
we're supposed to have meta for
everybody which is meant to uh I mean
it's it's based on the same etymology as
the poly word Mita which means friend so
it's it'd be more like Brotherly Love or
friendliness friendly feeling you know
Desiring good for the other person it's
not necessarily
like

what most people would call love it's
certainly not romantic love although in
Burma meta or mitta is uh it applies to
just even romantic love just because
um it's just a word for love in Burmese
so

but I mean if you read about mental meditation in the texts then a monk is supposed to just beam love in all directions and there are sutas like may all beings be happy-minded of the of the mental suto for example and it's just giving lists of all the different kinds of beings there are it's an exhaustive list includes everybody you know just various ways males and females you know like people no like the human level below human level above human level this direction is all the directions above and below it's just it's just exhausting you're supposed to send this meta which is at least you

know sincere friendly feeling if not you
know like deep spiritual love to all
beings in the entire universe
and it's not necessarily the definition
of metal but that is how it is taught in
the suit does and that's what you should
do if you're able to but
um loving everybody is not easy
that just all of a sudden reminds me of
the story of uh Ron Doss with neem
Crowley Baba that nimkoli Baba it was it
was hard to spend a lot of time with him
because he's you know so many people
wanted to spend time with him and he was
just kind of like a almost like a
recluse anyway he spent a lot of time
just alone in his room

and uh some there was this period where
neem karoli Baba would call ramdas to
him and ramdas would come and you know
kneel in front of him and he would just
lean over and say always tell the truth
and love everybody and then send him
away then maybe a couple hours later
he'd call him again he'd lean over say
the same thing always tell the truth and
love everybody
and this just went on for days and days
and finally Ron Das and this happens a
lot in ashrams it's just like this
pressure cooker it's like a [__]
accelerator you know he's having a
really bad time and he is just miserable

and so Ron uh maharaji named probably
Baba calls ramdas and RAM Das is you
know pretty much in tears and he just
tells him I'm telling you the truth I
don't love everybody
and then maharaji just kind of leans
over very compassionately maybe like
stroking his beard and just says always
tell the truth and love everybody
and that's really advanced practice
because uh some people are jerks you
know they're [_] and stuff and
I'm it's I suppose the saying is true
that if you really understand somebody
you can't hate them but um it's not it's
not easy to love everybody
I mean I

I think I'm better at it than most
people even though it was a Hermit for
Going on 30 years
you know I can I think that's one of the
best things that happened to me as a
monk it's one of the most important
things I learned
because when you're you're a monk you're
trying to perfect yourself
and it just it's not easy I mean it's
damn difficult even if you're trying
with all your heart
to be a saintly person
it I mean it just doesn't work that way
and so I've started having more
compassion for other people being [_]

up because I tried with all my heart not
to be [__] up and it was not easy I
mean I did not fully succeed
and so

um yeah it's like with other people it's
like other people are [__] up yeah
welcome to the human race

but I will have been fortunate enough
I've had enough Karma Good Karma like
Merit in my life I suppose that I've
never really

been like have have really seriously
[__] with with another by another
person like some malevolent evil person
never been in a torture chamber anything
like that never been a victim of just
chronic abuse like as a child or

something so I have been relatively
fortunate which maybe makes it easier
for me

but I think I'm just going to move on to
the next question here

wait wait wait just a second here

okay yeah I almost I almost skipped a
question this is the last question by
Mary spelled m-e-r-r-y

English with Ponyo episode one what is
the difference between I have been

meditating and I had been meditating

because they both passed tenses well

Mary spelled m-e-r-r-y does not speak

English as his first language and so he
wants me to uh tell him the difference

between and I I'm not even sure what
it's like past perfect and
past participle I think had been
meditating I think is past participle no
that'd be had meditated
yeah it's past perfect in something
something I don't know I don't remember
but I have been meditating can include
the present time whereas I had been
meditating it indicates that it's in the
past
so the main difference is it's I have
been meditating
um you know it can include the present
time the the
the implication is that it still
continues to the present time whereas I

had been meditating means you're not
doing it right now that it's it's in the
past

and I don't remember what the the
technical terms one of them is past
perfect I'm pretty sure

so I'll just move on to next question
this is from Jules

and jewels says could you briefly expand
a bit on your feline naming schema was
there a cat number one what number are
you up to now

um this is

um following up on uh a video I did with
Brian Rue relatively recently it's our
most recent video with Brian Rue where

he's got a cat named happy it's his
second cat in a row with the same name
so I call it happy number two and then I
pointed out that one of the best cats I
ever had possibly the best cat I ever
had was named cat number two
and um

yeah so I mean that was in Burma and
I remember there was a flood the river
the chinuin River flooded and it was
really I had to Wade through the chest
deep water just to get to the Village to
go for alms and
um

I one time near the congregational I
heard like a kitten meowing and I went
and looked and there were these two half

starved kittens they apparently like
their [_] somehow they wound up there
probably because of the flooding maybe
the mother just couldn't cross the water
to get to the babies or something and
they were half starved and uh so we
started feeding them and one of them cat
number two grew up to be a normal female
cat number one who was a boy kitten and
he was more starved he was more
malnourished than his sister and he I
don't think he ever fully recovered I
think he was slightly mentally [_]
he was uh
he was never like completely a cat I
think and we lived out in this Forest it

was like a wildlife refuge there and there was a lot of predators and so forth and uh count number two uh she eventually had kittens she had two kittens which I named cat number three and Cat Number Four and eventually they all just disappeared I mean um cat number one I think you probably got picked off by a hawk or something and Cat's number three and four I can't really remember cat number two though she went into heat and gotten the Wanderlust or the lust wander and wandered off and just never came back so she might have got picked off by uh an eagle or something too there were a lot of predators in that Forest that uh

would make an easy meal of a little
kitty cat

which they certainly also did with the
wild chickens and so forth

so I only went one through four and that
was it and cats really don't give a damn
what their names are dogs can kind of
appreciate their name but cats just
don't give a damn

so

that was it and then uh since then I
haven't really named any cats since I
got to number four I don't think there's
ever going to be a cat number five
I'll probably just name it Attila or
something I don't know

so the next question is from achala I think it's pronounced achala a-c-a-l-a and achala says

I have observed that some Sri Lankan monks make use of money a friend from Sri Lanka told me that monks in Sri Lanka can go to markets to buy food for themselves and they don't go for pindapata or Armstrong as far as I know as pervinia monks aren't allowed to keep money what do you think of this is this still okay for monks to use money as long as they are using it only to feed themselves also is it mandatory for them to go for pindapata thank you okay well poor achala here is uh somewhat naive with regard to the state

of Asian theravada Buddhism because it is
my experience that most theravanna
Buddhist monks especially the Asian ones
handle money it's probably somewhere in
the neighborhood of like 97 of Burmese
monks and the money is probably at least
97 of Sri Lankan monks handle money
maybe in Thailand who they tend to be a
little stricter it might be only like 95
of Asian monks there handle money
certainly at least 90
so yeah Sri Lankan monks I mean some of
them have jobs it's like college
professors they're teaching like
Buddhism or poly or something in a
university and receiving a salary for it

Sri Lankan monks in general they're pretty corrupt with regard to following the rules of monastic discipline so I remember once when I was a very Junior monk in Burma meeting two or three Sri Lankan monks and somebody pointed out to me I was I was kind of odd because I actually didn't handle money I was actually following the rule and they were just like astonishing this like how do you manage and it's like well I mean the same way monks managed in the Buddhist time I suppose because that's when they made the rule so

um yeah it's just Shameless monks or
just Mindless amongst just mindlessly
following along with all the other monks
are doing it's like Christianity in the
west that means how many Christians in
the west like gather not up their
Treasures upon the Earth or or love
their enemies or bless those that curse
them or sell all that they have give the
money to the poor and take up their
cross and wander around casting out
demons and Healing The Sick and so forth
I mean just because the the scriptures
say you're supposed to do that I mean
it's just it's just beyond human nature
to expect most people even most monks

to really go for it

and Asian monks are just following along

with the corrupt tradition Western monks

it may be only half of Western Montana

money because they have to be much more

serious about what they're doing they're

not taking an easy out by becoming a

monk they have to go against their own

culture against their own family

sometimes they lose their friends you

know they have to be really serious

about what they're doing and so they

tend to be more serious

so let's see yeah monks are not allowed

to keep money they're not allowed to

keep gold or silver or anything that can

be used as money it's just strictly for

forbidden it's just prohibited it's
called nissigee apachidia which means
you can't even make confession for it
until you get rid of your money and most
Asian monks are not willing to do that
you have to get rid of the stuff that
you've bought with the money to most
Asian monks just aren't even going to do
it so they're they're pure they're never
pure

like for one second ever because they've
got this nice idea of the stuff you have
to get rid of before you can make
confession for having it and they they
just won't get rid of it you know they
just have no intention of getting rid of

their money because it's just so convenient having money is convenient so the question is it still okay for monks to use money as long as they're using it only to feed themselves no the only time it is allowable for a monk to touch money is if he sees a wallet or some money or a purse or something on the ground or has been left behind by a layperson it's then actually his duty to pick it up and put it somewhere safe so that when the person comes back for it it's there

but of course it's not your own money and you can't pick it up by the side of the road it has to be on the monastery premises in order for you to be able or

allowed to touch the stuff
or another possible way that it's
allowable for a monk to handle money is
if some Monk actually has forfeited it
and then the sangha will pick some Monk to
take that money and go throw it away
somewhere just just fling it over a wall
throw it out in the woods somewhere
and I've never heard of that actually
happening
because as I say they just if they got
money they're just gonna keep it or
spend it
so let's see and then the last part of
this question here is is it mandatory
for monks to go for pindapata which is

go for alms you know take your bowl and walk to the Village it is not mandatory but every monk at his ordination is admonished

that he should content himself with eating only alms food that he has collected by taking his bowl and walking through the village but it is allowable for example to accept an invitation to a Layman's house and let them serve you a meal that kind of a thing so it's not mandatory but it is encouraged

and I think one of the things that David datta wanted was

um when he tried to take over

um the Buddhist Sangha was he wanted to

make it mandatory he had to go for homes
wrong but um the Buddha said no it's not
necessary even though those who want to
do it as like a stricter practice are
allowed to do that

and it is good I mean it's a good
practice it was one of the two tongas
that I really felt good about practicing
was eating only almost food eventually
you come back to America you just can't
do it or I guess some monks can but it's
it's way easier if you're living in a
Buddhist culture where you just take
your bowl and walk to the village and
people put whatever food in they want to
give and then when you get enough you

leave and you sit down and eat it

it's just it's it's nice it's a good

practice

so I'll just move on to the next

question

this could be a three hour long one I

mean not not this question but this

video

this is from Stevie and Stevie says

what's your take on the anapolocity suit

as instructions for mindfulness of

breathing there's much disagreement on

how to practice it so how would you

approach it in a strict adherence to the

suta it seems to me that 14 of the 16

steps are active trainings that go

beyond knowing the breath so why not

follow the suto's instructions in their
entirety can you shed some light on this
thank you

well I actually reread the anapanai city
just so I could answer this question

better but I have to admit I never
really was much impressed by the
unapanasity suto

um I think the instructions in the sari
patana Sutra the section on mindfulness
of breathing is actually uh probably
more helpful

because it just seems so weird the suta
it seems to me is like

it's like anachronistic I think it's
like a later suta containing some

earlier material but it's gotten to the point of just the long lists of you know the the six of these and the the the Ten of those and the 37 of the other and and just

um yeah it just never really resonated with me I never really I never really was much impressed with this suit on but anyway these 16 points 16 practices here it's uh

let's see I'll just I'll just read I've got beekubodes and Venable Nana moli's translations that I mentioned earlier and uh it's pseudo 118.

so let's see

and how because this mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated so it

is a great fruit and great benefit here
abiku goes to the forest or to the root
of a tree or to an empty Hut sits down
having folded his legs crosswise said
his body erect and established
mindfulness in front of him ever mindful
he breathes in mindfully he breathes out
breathing in long he understands I
breathe in long or breathing out long he
understands I breathe out long breathing
in short he understands I breathe in
short breathing out short he understands
I breathe out short he trains thus I
shall breathe in experiencing the whole
body he trains thus as you'll breathe
out experiencing the whole body he

trains thus I shall breathe in
tranquilizing the body formation he
trains thus I shall breathe out
tranquilizing the body formation he
trains thus I shall breathe in
experiencing Rapture he trains thus I
shall breathe out experiencing Rapture
he trains thus I shall breathe in
experiencing pleasure he trains thus I
shall breathe out experiencing pleasure
he trains thus I should breathe in
experiencing the mental formation he
trains thus I shall breathe out
experiencing the mental formation he
trains thus I shall breathe in
tranquilizing the mental formation he
trains thus I shall breathe out

tranquilizing the mental formation he
trains thus I shall breathe in
experiencing the mind he trains thus I
shall breathe out experiencing the mind
he trains thus I shall breathe in
gladdening the mind he trains thus I
shall breathe out gladdening the mind he
trains thus I shall breathe in
concentrating the mind he trains thus I
shall breathe out concentrating the mind
he trains the social breathe in
liberating the mind he trains thus I
shall breathe out liberating the mind he
trains that so he shall breathe in
contemplating impermanence he trains
thus I shall breathe out contemplating

impermanence he trains love so she'll
breathe in contemplating fading away he
trains thus I shall breathe out
contemplating fading away he trains thus
I shall breathe in contemplating
cessation he trains the social breathe
out contemplating cessation he trains
love social breathe in contemplating
relinquishment

he trains us I shall breathe out
contemplating relinquished men because
that is how mindfulness of breathing is
developed and cultivated so that it is a
great fruit and great benefit
and

I don't know what to say I mean that
kind of thing has never really

impressed me much

um and those of you may have noticed

some of you maybe one have noticed that

once you get past I breathe in long I

breathe out long I breathe in short I

breathe out short all the rest of them

are in the future tense

like I shall breathe out experiencing

the whole body I shall breathe out

tranquilizing the body formation and so

forth so it's it's you're not even in

the present moment anymore it's like

it's like what they did was

they like super organize This and like

you start off just breathing mindfulness

of breathing and then they're trying to

throw in all this other stuff which are like the benefits of mindfulness of breathing or like a more advanced practices and it's instead of saying that you know this is going to happen eventually if you keep going with it they just say you're contemplating this will happen I will do this and it's just not a good way in my opinion of explaining it and it it just doesn't resonate with me I assume there are other people that I mean it's just wonderful this is their favorite sutra or something but um yeah it's just really this hyper complicated way of explaining something simple

and uh I think they just kind of went
about the formatting of it in a in a way
that it's um

yeah I think you'd probably be better
off just reading the mindfulness and
breathing part in the sunny patano suta
or just Just Breathe mindfully

so

let's see what's the question here again
though

there's much disagreement on how to
practice it yeah I mean some of it is
it's really hard I mean how are you
gonna how are you gonna practice oh I
will I will breathe in experiencing
Liberation I'll breathe out experiencing

Liberation I mean when you're just going to imagine it and you just have to wait for it to happen I mean what's the point of even thinking that unless you're just kind of setting yourself up for it you're kind of visualizing in advance but you're going to visualize it wrong because you can't imagine liberation so let's see

how would you approach it in a strict adherence to the sutra I I wouldn't practice it I mean this all this future tense like most of it is future tense of what you're going to do and I mean a lot of it you just don't have any conscious volition over whether it's going to happen How You Gonna I shall breathe in

experiencing pleasure I shall breathe
out experiencing pleasure I mean I mean
you may not have any say over that
I mean it's just it's gonna happen or
it's not

if you practice correctly there's a good
chance it will happen you know you
experience PT and so forth but I mean
why they would put it in this form of I
shall experience PT breathing in I shall
experience PT breathing out

I mean I mean if you're sitting that
cross I get thinking this stuff you're
not meditating you're just thinking
about all the stuff you're supposed to
experience

so you're better off just following one
of the other mindfulness of breath you
know like the the saw you know like a
carpenter sawing wood you know he's not
watching the breast go in and out he's
just watching right where the the wood
is being cut by the saw you know it's
like you're just watching right here
you're not following the breath in
you're not following the breath out
you're just keeping your attention right
here at the sensation of of the air
moving past your nostrils kind of a
thing that that to me is more useful
information than this long list of stuff
you're exposed to experience but you may
not have any control of whether you're

gonna experience or not

and it's all future tense stuff except

for just breathing in Long breathing out

long breathing in short breathing out

short once you get past that it's all

future tense

it's not really in the present moment

anymore

so I hope I didn't just rain on your

parade Stevie but that's my that's my

answer

and I'll just move on to the next

question this is from ludibus balam

and ludibus balam says two-part question

for Q a did any ordained monk you met as

a Maha Terra ever confide within you a

belief in having attained genres or described experiences which fit the rubric well for Jonas if so can you recall how they described it as a reflection on a first-hand experience um it's it's almost a taboo for monks to talk about experiencing Jonas um you know they'll just even ask them and they'll say oh I can't tell you but really it's not against the rules for a monk to tell another Monk it's just against the rules for a monk to tell a layperson but even so it's like in Burma I guess at least in Burma this monks will just they just didn't want to talk about and most of them probably haven't or they

they haven't experienced the the
supernatural the super normal states
that Jonna has converted into over time
um

so let's see I have met monks that
almost certainly have considered
themselves to attain Jonas they teach a
lot of that at pauldoya I've known quite
a few Palm monks including a few that
really some of the few that really did
well like of Western monks there aren't
very many Western monks that did the
whole course of that Paul was teaching
in Paul Seattle and that includes Jonna
so I have met a few but they just don't
talk about it

um

yeah

so I have met monks that probably have attained jono I mean I met one old Seattle who said he can just sit for hours without thinking and probably that would be at least second jono right there because I don't think he was talking about just passing out so I think I'll just move on to ludibus balaam's next question here is there and this is another one of those questions I don't think I fully grasp is there a link between the power involved in talismans and psychokinesis and the teaching of abstaining from

holding to views could there be a common ground that is responsible for some Arya exhibiting CD powers and some not yeah I really I do not grasp this this question um is there a link between the power involved in talismans and psychokinesis and the teaching of abstaining for holding the views it seems to me that the power of talisman's and psychokinesis would rely upon holding to views you have to like have faith you have to believe in something especially if it's if it's like a Talisman it's this object that you that is considered to have some sort of power that really that the thing itself you

know you can

someone can think that this chapstick has the power to heal him and if they really believe it you know they got the grain the faith of a grain of mustard seed that this chapstick you know just by holding it in their hand maybe praying to it or saying some Mantra is going to cure them of some nasty disease is it possible that it would work but this chapstick really doesn't have any like nasty disease curing abilities then it's just the belief in the mind it's sort of like tarot cards or something um you know the tarot cards don't have any powers I mean they're just made in a factory out of paper and they're

laminated they got ink on them but
they're not any different from regular
playing cards with regard to the
materials they're made out of it's just
the the belief of the person using it
and don't give any power that it's got
so I would say that talismans are that
way you know like the the lucky charm
whatever it is the tetragrammaton or
whatever the the only reason it has any
power at all is the belief of the person
that associated with that and that is of
course not abstaining from holding the
views I mean that's the view that this
chapstick or the tetragrammaton or the
whatever Talisman has power is what

gives it its power you have to believe
in it

um like the the psychic powers of some
really Advanced Saints is different I
mean I think that just happened
spontaneously through just the wide open
liminality of of the the enlightened or
extremely highly Advanced being that
it's not an act of will they're not
making stuff happen like magic it's just
it just spontaneously happens
so I don't even know if I've answered
this question
but that's my best shot at and we're
getting up close to three hours so I'm
gonna
I'll go give it one last look see here

this I I really want to do justice to
all these questions I really want to
respect you guys by doing my best to
answer your questions

so is there a link between the power
involved in talismans and psychokinesis
and the teaching of abstaining from
holding the views

um that seems yeah that seems to be the
the main point of this and I really do
think there's a difference between
um like talismans and certain like
magical things that are like acts of
will

that that would require holding to views
as opposed to just the the miraculous

stuff that happens with enlightened
beings or which can Enlighten happen
around the line beings like neem curly
Baba he's at least extremely Advanced
even if he wasn't fully enlightened
well people wiser to me that knew him
better than me think that he was
um that that's just a different kind of
Paranormal Activity that's just
spontaneously arising through this
portal to other dimensions in a human
form
but that wouldn't be like
um
it wouldn't be like like an active will
because an enlightened being especially
just doesn't have will anymore

they're not creating Karma they have no
more volition

they're just

spontaneously doing what is right often
just as a reflection back to people of
their own Karma like Ron Doss used to
say about neem curly bubbles the better
the better you knew him the real you the
better you realize that there was really
nobody there

he was just empty he was just like a
mirror reflecting your own Karma back at
you

so I'll just move on to the next
question

and this is some air rain

and I'm I'm gonna have to do this in a separate way I'm going to read the question and and then I'm just going to have to answer it in a separate video because to do justice does this question would take at least 15 minutes I'm pretty sure but I'll at least include it as the question and then if you want to know the answer you can just refer to the uh

uh q a

47a or whatever it winds up being called but Aaron says

I think a large blind spot in the Dharma may be that when acting in a dharmic way towards people in the modern world especially in a culturally confused and

crime-ridden Melting Pot more often than
not

who are dealing with crude humans who
are unable to receive or even recognize
Dharma continuing to interact with them
in a dharmic fashion will be met with no
results and in many cases even in flame
or embolden their behavior because they
immediately recognize you as a weak or
passive and it will double down and
intensify their behavior or predation
does Buddhism have any way of dealing
with this besides disassociation or
simply allowing people to mow you down
steal from you or kill you obviously
saying that your own Karma put you in

that situation does not solve anything
I'm sure it works just fine in a
monastery full of strict monks lay
people have to deal with predatory and
criminal chimp every day on the street
at work or in their own neighborhood
where short of quitting your job or
selling your house you must be able to
protect yourself or use forceful means
to make them stop I guess the main
question is beyond self victimization
Karma blaming or continually ignoring or
enabling and dissociating what is an
actual solution for a layperson who is
dealing with being continually assaulted
or by a person who doesn't give a [__]
about your dharmic way of attempting to

make them stop

so again

um considering the the length of this
video already

um I'm gonna have to just to do justice
to this I'm just gonna have to make like
a separate video and if you're
interested in my ques my answer

um

then uh yeah I advise you to uh to refer
to the other video

and so finally the very last question
last question of all is from

and Maha wamsa says is it allowable
under vinya for monks to curse people
out using foul language

Etc

and it's strange that I was I studied intensively and followed it strictly for many years and

um I based on my imperfect memory I'm pretty sure that it's an offense to curse another Monk

to just verbally abuse another Monk and I think it's a lesser offense to do that to a lay person it's it's weird the way some of the rules work like it's it's a poachity offense an offensive medium severity to punch like physically attack another Monk but it's it's only a ducata offense it's like the lowest level of offense to attack a layperson so you can punch a layperson in the nose it's only

like the

the most minor offense

and I think it's the same way with with

um

like verbal abuse here that you know

cussing them out calling them bad names

and so forth

um

uh yeah if it's any offense at all I'm

pretty sure it is it'd be a ducata

offense just the the lowest level of

offense that is uh absolved despite

confession to another Monk but

but

this is called perusavacha or like

verbal abuse just calling someone you

dick you worthless piece of [_] that
kind of stuff

um or or even you want to be more
diabolical and subtle you know you want
to just like humiliate them right just
in some long intricate way I mean that
works too my father was was good at that
sort of thing I mean not towards me I
mean he was a good dad but some some of
the insults he gave down
and they were just genius sometimes
but anyway

um if you're really trying to make
somebody feel bad and by saying you know
you're saying something with the
intention of causing them to feel
unhappy because of you saying it that

technique is perusavacha which is one of the four kinds of wrong speech so I mean even if there's some loophole in the rules

that that it's not specifically laid out as against the rules still it's against dhamma it's against Buddhist ethics it's one of the four kinds of long speech like I might as well go into the four kinds of wrong speech over here one is just flat out and lying and lying means you're you're saying something that isn't true with the intent of deal of deceiving somebody then there's

um uh pisuna Macho which is like bad

melting someone behind their back in
order to get people kind of biased
against them you want to like make them
not like the other person so you're bad
melting the behind their back so like
malicious gossip that's that's another
and that can even be true I mean if it's
like

um you know you're just saying you know
this I wouldn't buy a car from this
person because he's you know he's when
he swindles people something like that
if you're doing it just out of sincere
you know this person wants to buy a car
from someone you know who's trying to
sell like a piece of junk at like you
know 20 000 bucks or something if you're

doing it just because you don't want to see them get swindled that's one thing you might be helping them but if you're doing it you know then maybe not even interested in buying cars you just wanting to bad-mouth this person even if it's true even if they are a swindler or whatever if you're saying it for the sake of you know getting someone else to dislike that person or like them less then that's peace in a vodka that's the second kind of wrong speech Third Kind is perusa matcha which is Harsh speech and that includes bad-mouthing people cursing people just to their face and it can be true I mean even it could

be true I mean maybe they really are an
[_] or whatever but if you're saying
telling them that with the intention of
making them feel bad then that's wrong
speech and the fourth is some papalapa
which is just useless chatter idle
chatter you know just gossip that kind
of stuff just so I'm sorry spam
and those are the four kinds of wrong
speech so this
um cursing people out using foul
language I mean using foul language just
like you stub your toe and you cuss
that's not against the rules
so if you're by yourself
you know you stub your toe and you cause
that's that's not against the rules

there is a weird obscure bikini rule for
for the nuns where it's again it's a
pachy the offense for them to beat
themselves and curse themselves
but um it's just a feminine thing I
guess because uh there's no equivalent
rule for preventing monks from like
beating their their chest and like
cursing themselves
and that's it that is that's the last
question and we're three hours I think
this might be the longest q a thus far
and I had to skip one question just so I
can address it in a different video
sakes
but it's been good and uh if you have

any questions you want answered then if
you think that I'm in a position to
answer them like if they're about you
know Buddhist practice Buddhist
philosophy Buddhist history
um you know just monasticism in general
living in Burma meditation that kind of
a thing
cats my cats especially
cats that I have owned in the past
that sort of thing
um yeah just include them in the
comments below or if you have access to
the Discord server use that
if you have access to uh my subscribe
Star channel you can you can refer to
that and uh

you're you're welcome to ask questions
and be happy

Hello and welcome to episode 47A
of question and answer. I am your host
Panyo Bo Sang.

And the the Q&A that I just did lasted
for more than 3 hours and I was hoarse
from talking for 3 hours straight and I
stopped and had a little bit of dinner,
got myself a glass of bovine glandular
secretions to kind of soothe my throat.

And now I'm back at it to answer one
last question. And even before
uh the Q&A went for 3 hours, I figured
that I was probably going to have to
make this a separate show just to do
justice to this one question.

And I read it on the Q&A but I didn't

answer it. So I'm going to read it again here and then try to answer it as best I can. It's really a major question and I'll just do my best.

Question is from Erin and Erin says, "I think a large blind spot in the Dharma may be that when acting in a dharmic way towards people in the modern world, especially in a culturally confused and crime-ridden melting pot, more often than not you're dealing with crude humans who are unable to receive or even recognize Dharma. Continuing to do Continuing to interact with them in a dharmic fashion will be met with no results and in many cases even inflame or embolden their behavior because they

immediately recognize you as weak or passive and will double down and intensify their behavior or predation.

Does Buddhism have any way of dealing with this besides disassociation or simply allowing people to mow you down, steal from you or kill you?

Obviously, saying that your own karma put you in that situation does not solve anything. I'm sure it works just fine in a monastery full of strict monks. Lay people have to deal with predatory and criminal chimps every day on the street, at work or in their own neighborhood where short of quitting your job or selling your house, you must be able to

protect yourself or use forceful means to make them stop. I guess the main question is beyond self-victimization, karma blaming or continually ignoring, enabling and disassociating, what is an actual solution for a lay person who is dealing with being continually assaulted or robbed by a person who doesn't give a [__] about your dharmic way of attempting to make them stop?"

And this question was submitted in the Q&A room of the Discord server and some wise guy um put the emoji underneath this of crossed swords because this person is challenging Dharma.

Um

saying that uh there is a large blind spot

and so on. And it also it caused a certain amount of commentary from other other members of the group

including one person who said, "I asked a similar question once in Ajahn

Ñāṇamoli's channel. His answer gets me

rather annoyed although I kind of get

where he comes from. I asked about

protecting my family and killing an

armed robber if they come to my house

and he said somewhere along the line of,

'Well, that's kind of the risk of having

a family. You can't fully practice

Dharma.' "

And then another person

left this comment.

"I doubt the Buddha spent a lot of time going around telling lay people not to defend their families from immediate threats or telling kings that they should never punish violent criminals.

It seems like there is no shortage of people who actually treat each other badly for no good reason that you could spend a lifetime on scolding those people before you got around to telling decent folk about how they need to be complete pacifists.

So there's a lot to cover or a lot to unpack.

Um the the ultimate answer I think is fairly straightforward but still um there's a lot of statements made here that I probably should address.

The first one, I think a large blind spot in the Dharma may be and then Erin goes into this. I really don't think there's a blind spot in the Dharma. I mean, Dharma acknowledges the reality that if you live in this world, there's going to be [__] happening and the best way of dealing with that is just renounce the world. That doesn't mean that you just go into a cushy monastery. I mean, nowadays a lot of the time it

does but in the Buddha's time, you went out and just flung yourself upon the mercy of the universe and essentially on just the power of your own merit from doing that.

And there were I mean, in the Buddha's time, there were probably a higher density of bad people than nowadays.

Nowadays, we're living in an age of spiritual mediocrity. There's a fewer saints and also fewer sociopaths, fewer psychopaths, fewer mass murderers.

I mean, in the Buddha's time, I mean, a lot of the sociopathic mass murderers were kings, were running countries.

And I mean, nowadays, I mean, we may have like a senile buffoon as the leader

of the country. It's still like a constitutional republic and just like having people tortured to death that you don't like doesn't happen much anymore.

Maybe among cartels on the the the Mexican border with the USA but not in America as a whole.

So it's not really a blind spot in the Dharma cuz the Dharma addresses the issue that there's going to be this kind of [__] happening

especially if you live as a lay person, you're going to have a family that you are duty-bound to protect. You have a home and and like property that you are duty-bound to protect. And so by

renouncing all that sort of stuff you're not so much escaping from reality but you you know, way you're getting closer to reality because you've got fewer distractions to distract you from the essence of of experience, the essence of existence.

So

referring to the culturally confused and crime-ridden melting pot where lay people have to deal with bad people.

Yeah, I suppose in Chicago or Detroit or some big city um

your chances of meeting with like

mentally disturbed and potentially

violent people is greater than living in a small town for example.

I mean, in the Buddha's time, they had bandits and so forth that were infesting forests so you might be better off in the city although you're probably more of a target for kings and just sociopathic administrators and so forth.

So let's continue down this question.

"You continually interact with them in a dharmic fashion will be met with no results and in many cases even inflame or embolden their behavior because they immediately recognize you as weak or passive and will double down." That's not necessarily true either. Um if you interact in a dharmic fashion, for for

starters, you will be calm and you will not be afraid. And predators, if they if they detect fear, they're more they're more likely to go for it.

And also if you react in some sort of violent, agitated way again, it's going to inflame a predator even more. You know, it's going to be like violent feedback feeding their own violence.

So remaining calm and unafraid is a dharmic approach and if if you're not afraid of them, they're going to think twice before they mess with you.

And also if you remain calm then it's not going to be

like feeding their violence.

And I watched a movie not too long ago.

Uh

it's a a relatively well-known movie,

The Men Who Stare at Goats.

And it's based on a true story. I think

the US Army was actually experimenting

with kind of psychological ways of

dealing with enemies.

And I think it kind of fizzled out. Not

not much came of it. But

it was like if there's a violent person

confronting you then you remain calm and

kind of neutral. I mean, you don't do

anything that's going to inflame them.

And a lot of the time that is enough to

just kind of fizzle out their their aggression. The aggression doesn't meet with any obstacle, you know? It it's not pushing against anything and so it's just kind of you know, it just kind of wears itself out. I mean, it doesn't always happen that way.

But

a lot of psychos, I mean, they feed on the fear, you know? They want you to struggle against them and that kind of encourages them to keep going.

So a dharmic approach would include that. I mean, if you wanted to be super saintly, the the really dharmic approach is you being love at your enemies. And

it's not just Buddhism that teaches that. Christianity is better known for the whole idea of loving your enemies, blessing those that curse you.

Um

and and there were some early Christians who really took that to heart. I mean, they might get fed to lions but they're blessing the lions and the people that set the lions loose on them. You know, they're singing hymns. They're they're they're rejoicing that they're dying in the name of Jesus Christ or whatever.

And that's that's extreme. I mean, that's more than you can expect from the average person even the average like lay

Buddhist.

But to interact with a bad person in a dharmic fashion, it doesn't matter if if they have any appreciation for Dharma or Buddhism because

most of it is happening at a subconscious level anyway. Like even like a vicious dog

You know, it's like acting afraid or or running or whatever is just going to like kick in the predator instinct and it's the same with predatory humans.

So, in that respect Dharma it can at least keep you calm and unafraid which is going to reduce the odds of bad [__] happening. It's not just going to embolden I mean maybe a few. They might

see you as just some sort of passive
beta that's an easy mark or some such.
So, let's see. I'll keep scrolling down
here a little bit.

Does Buddhism have any way of dealing
with this besides disassociation or
simply allowing people to mow you down,
steal from you, or kill you?

Well, that's really getting to the meat
of it.

Um

a lay person living in the world
interacting with bad people sometimes,
having a family and a home to defend. I
mean, you can't really call a man a man
if he's not going to defend his family.

I remember

I used to have this friend. He was a monk for many years.

And then he dropped out of the monkhood.

He got married. He had a wife and a stepdaughter.

And he was just really uncompromising in keeping five precepts.

Just uncompromising and he was he was a relatively saintly guy.

And I asked him once, I said, "What happens if someone assaults your wife right in front of you?"

And amazingly this guy he says, "Well, it would be her karma, wouldn't it?" And it's like how can you be a man and not defend your own woman or defend your own

family?

I mean, you may be a human male

but I mean you you're unworthy of the

name man if that's the the approach

you're going to take. I mean, if you've

got a woman

then

you should defend that woman. You've got

children, you really should defend your

children. Even if you've got a house, I

mean, you really should stop somebody

from breaking in and stealing your

stuff.

So, the lay person

has to really I mean, I've

I've after I stopped being a monk I

really thought about this a lot that I mean, there's a certain stoicism in being a lay Buddhist because you can't take the route of being a saint. It's sort of like the tantric path of you have to transmute like vice into something spiritual.

And in a way it's like the way of the samurai or the Bushido where um

I mean, you may have to kill enemies but at least you're not doing it motivated by hatred or rage, you know, this ill will, anything like that. It's just duty. It's you do what needs to be done. You remain calm.

You know, no hatred in your heart, no rage in your heart. You just do what needs to be done and by doing it calmly you do it better. You're you're better able to defend your home if you remain calm. You know, it's like James Bond mentality, you know, he doesn't get all worked up.

He does what needs to be done effectively and efficiently.

So,

even though I was a Buddhist monk for 30 years, I have a woman and a home now and if somebody starts breaking into my home, I'm going to load the Glock and I'm going to deal with it. Calling the

cops may not work. They might not show up for 20 or 30 minutes.

But you remain calm and at least you're not motivated by hatred. I mean, you're still going to make bad karma. You just have to take the hit because I mean, I'm not a monk anymore. I'm just of my own volition I have chosen to live the life of a householder now and so there are times when I just have to do non-Dharmic things.

But I mean, you can still add as much Dharma as possible even if you're shooting an intruder in your house at least you're doing it like with a certain equanimity.

I don't think it's possible to have complete equanimity when killing somebody cuz deep down I mean, there's this connection. But still I mean, you're not motivated by hatred which is just just increases hatred.

Hatred increases hatred. Anger increases anger. So,

in a way that's that's where you just cut it off. I mean,

um

there's famous verse in the Dhammapada that hatred or enmity does not is not ended by enmity. Enmity is ended by non-enmity and this is an eternal law.

And it's not just Buddhism that teaches

this. It's any kind of advanced spiritual system teaches it. Also Christianity teaches the same thing.

Um they even take it farther with like love your enemies, bless those that curse you, you know.

Um

And there there are have been Christians who actually take this seriously. I mean, if you really want to be a completely saintly person, then you would consider it to be worse to kill than to be killed and just let yourself get killed. But I mean, if you're alone, you may be able to make that saintly choice.

But to just let your family be killed
without lifting a finger, just passively
again I mean, you're unworthy of of
being called a man
or a husband or a father in that case.

So, you do what needs to be done but you
do it with as little anger and hatred in
your heart as possible. You just do what
needs to be done.

It's not just fatalistic I have to
accept whatever happens. Maybe if you're
a monk but even a monk is allowed to
strike out in self-defense.

So,

I'll just continue scrolling down here.

Um

I'm sure it works just fine in a monastery full of strict monks. Again, in ancient India there were psychopaths and some of them were kings ruling countries that were just violent, bloodthirsty psychopaths.

A lot of kings became kings by killing their own father or killing their own brother.

And according to Buddhism if you kill your own father, you're guaranteed of hell in your next life.

So, let's see.

Uh you must be able to protect yourself and use forceful means to make people stop doing the bad things. Yeah, that's fine but it doesn't necessarily involve

hatred or anger. You just do what needs to be done and I mean, if you can do it compassionately with maybe even a little meta, a little friendly feeling in your heart then that is best. The the more positive the mental states, the better it is. Even if you've got to like defend your your home or something using negative mental states it just makes bad karma that comes back on you. I mean, there's just no escape from that.

So, here it says, "I guess the main question is beyond self-victimization, karma blaming, or continually ignoring

and enabling and disassociating, what is an actual solution for a lay person who is dealing with being continually assaulted or robbed by a person who doesn't give a [__] about your Dharmic way of attempting to make them stop?"

Well, if you're really being Dharmic, you're not necessarily even attempting to make them stop.

Let's say if you're unarmed and you're up against five guys with machine guns, I mean, you're not going to make them you're not going to make them stop realistically. If they're going to shoot you, they're going to shoot you.

Maybe if you're dealing with a person who isn't just pure a sociopathic evil

I mean, you may be able to
reason with them calmly.

Um

you know, just being friendly works
better as a general rule than being a
friend works better than being an enemy.

The best way to defeat an enemy is to
turn them into a friend.

It may be that they're not the sort of
person that is worth being friends with.

I mean, they'd be a bad friend.

But at least you can just remain calm
and not have hatred and anger in your
heart because that just makes things
worse. And I think a lot of people in
the West, they're so used to like a

materialistic, utilitarian ethic

where I mean, karma just isn't in the picture at all.

That

they don't really see that their own mental states do condition their own experience in just a fundamental, radically profound way.

That we are

in a way dreaming our way through life.

We're not fully awake

and we are creating our own reality. And

people that are born and raised in

Western culture like spiritual Siberia,

even if they might call themselves

Buddhists, they just can't accept this.

They just think it's woo-woo,

touchy-feely, escape from reality stuff
that it's just, you know, philosophy
philosophizing pulled out of a rectum
somewhere.

But

it I mean, it it is true
that I mean, as a lay person you have to
do what needs to be done which may
involve, you know, using violence to
protect yourself, your family, your
property. But still
to use just the stoic approach of doing
just what needs to be done just because
it needs to be done or um you know, the
way of the samurai, the Bushido, you
know, it's like

no anger, no hatred because that just makes things worse.

So, I guess that's that's the the answer, the best answer I can give. I mean, sometimes being non-violent may not work especially if you have a family protect.

Um but at the very least

you do it with

a minimum of negative emotion, a minimum of hate and a minimum of fear, a minimum of

of anger, you know, just remain as calm

as you can. And if you can manage

somehow any kind of compassion for this

miserable wretch who's making problems

for people,

then that's even better. Because really anybody who makes problems, anyone who's like bad is a suffering being. Happy people are more likely to just live and let live. The people that are just deliberately messing with people tend to be miserable people. And part of it is they're so miserable they want to make somebody else more miserable than them just so that they can seem happy by comparison.

So,

the the standard Buddhist approach of dealing with enemies is beaming love at them, beaming meta, at least friendly feeling if you don't

want to call it love.

And that is just so extreme, it's so
against human nature that it's
unrealistic, especially if someone's
already upset
to to even advise them to do that.

But still, at the very, very least, have
the minimum amount of negative emotions
and negative motivations
like motivating your behavior. Because
it's just going to come back to you, and
ultimately it's going to make things
worse.

And um

I guess that's it.

And seriously, anyone wants to break
into my house at night, I am loading the

Glock.

So, be forewarned. And also, be happy.

Hello and welcome to episode 48 of
question and answer. I am your host
Panya Bassan.

And I'm sitting here on our back deck in
South Carolina drinking sweet tea
and gradually
gradually, ever so gradually, becoming a
redneck.

In fact,
one major step I took towards becoming a
redneck just today
is I went down to the bank and took out
a loan to buy a Jeep.

Now, one of one of those wimpy like SUV
Jeeps either. It's like a It's like a
Wrangler.

And I'm out here on the back porch
because my sweetheart's mama is visiting
us and she has uh
moved into the
studio
as her bedroom.

So,

I'm out here.

And

just to sort of try and
prevent more 3-hour-long Q&As, I'm doing
this only like 9 days after the last Q&A
instead of 2 weeks.

And I took days off. I took 2 days off
from work.

Um partly so I could go and pee in a
cup.

Partly, it turned out so I could buy a Jeep.

And uh

partly, I'm just burning off holiday pay or PTO, paid time off.

Because uh it looks like I'm very probably going to be switching jobs to one that

pays higher at a different sheet metal shop. And that's that's one of the reason why why my sweetheart wanted a vehicle is uh

this this new shop is not a 5-minute drive away. It's more like a half an hour drive away.

So, she doesn't want to be stranded here

if in case the dog gets sick or something.

Or she suddenly wants to rush out and buy mulch, that kind of thing.

But, without any further ado, I suppose I should start answering questions. And because

this is sort of uh

um less than 2 weeks, we it's down to a manageable number. It's still still quite a few, but uh

uh we it's it's not going to be 3 hours this time.

And so, the first question is from the Arya Swasti Project.

And the Arya Swasti Project says, "When seeing an open, dilapidated, vacant

parking lot, abandoned building, or places that used to have a lot of activity and are now unoccupied and deserted, I feel a certain calm and even joy. I want to go and stand or sit in them. Does this seem weird to you?"

Um well, it doesn't seem particularly weird. Um maybe I can relate to that to some degree, like going to a fairgrounds when there's no fair going on. It's just like empty. And but you know, there's all this commotion and stuff going on there at other times of year. Or especially when I was a kid, and to some degree now, it's you just get sort of a spooky feeling when you go into an

abandoned house.

Where people lived there, but now it's just all dilapidated and run-down.

So,

um I don't feel particular joy in going to such places, but there is kind of a like a an intriguing feeling you can get or I can get.

But um yeah, I don't

I'll just move on to the next question here.

Next question is from Achala or Asala or Akala, a c a l a. I think it's Achala.

And Achala says,

"As far as rebirth is concerned, being born as an animal is actually Buddhist teachings.

I have heard from some monks that rebirth as an animal is a Hindu thing and not Buddha's teachings. I personally don't agree with this. I think probably Hindus later took the teachings from the Buddha and then put them into their scriptures. If rebirth has nothing to do with animals, then the question arises, how do animals come into existence? What are the causes which led them to be born in the animal realm? Why aren't there just human beings if rebirth is only concerned with humans? So, I personally do believe that akusala karma would lead to rebirth in the three lower realms, but I would like if you could

expand your thoughts on it and probably also provide a good sutta on the matter.

Thank you.

Well, I was discussing being reborn as an animal

in the in the previous Q&A number 47.

And um yeah, there are there are suttas that definitely talk about. In fact, the entire Jataka literature is full of stories of the Buddha and his chief disciples

being animals. I mean, it's they're not animals in every The Buddha wasn't an animal in every rebirth, but he was, you know, the fish king and the the frog king and, you know, the the wise rabbit that threw himself into a fire to offer

his own meat to uh like a a wandering beggar who is actually Sakka, king of gods, who then rewarded this rabbit by drawing a rabbit on the moon because in India, it's the rabbit in the moon and not the man in the moon, which there then resulted in the idea that the Buddha is the man in the moon.

There's the sutta, I think I mentioned it in the previous Q&A also about how hard it is to get out of the animal realm just because um you have much less opportunity for earning merit and just uh acquiring wisdom, like learning about Dhamma when you're an animal.

There was there was the the simile of

the blind turtle, the blind sea turtle.

And I won't repeat it because I did it

in the last one, but uh

he says here, "Zen monks,

some Zen monks say that rebirth as an

animal is a Hindu thing and not Buddhist

teachings, but then again, it's one of

the

I'm pretty sure it's one of the koans in

the Mumonkan

or the Wumen Guan. I think it's one of

the first ones where

um

some Zen master answers the question, is

is like an enlightened being subject to

karma? And he said, "No." And because of

him saying, "No." he was reborn as a fox

back behind the monastery somewhere.

And um

some other monk hears about this story
or and he knows that the fox is is this
the Zen master who who gave the wrong
answer and

he goes back and if I remember the the
koan correctly, I haven't read this in a
while, he uh sort of preaches to the
preaches to the fox somehow that uh that
the arahant or the fully enlightened
being is at one with the law of karma,
which is the more correct answer and
then the the fox died and was liberated
from the animal realm.

So, it's yeah, it's I mean, it's been

a teaching of Buddhism, if not the
Buddha's

authentic teachings, at least it has
been taught in Buddhism since ancient
times because there's all kinds of
mention of the Buddha being in a
previous life, animals of people being
reborn as animals. There's mention of it
in Zen stories. Um

so

yeah, some of even some of the Jatakas
are found in the the in the
like in the Vinaya, there's the the
story about how uh the Buddha in a
previous life was a wise quail, if I
remember correctly.

So, yeah, it goes back I it could be

that the the Buddhists and the Hindus or
the Buddhists and the proto-Hindus
got it from
like the
an earlier source, you know, just like
the
the traditional Shramana tradition
of um
that that that went back to the the
prehistoric Indus Valley civilization.
Like some of the early Upanishads are
always talking are are also talking
about um
a sort of
reincarnational evolution where you're
starting off as something very simple,

maybe a plant, maybe even less than a
plant, like a crystal or something, and
then you go up through the animal realm
and you know, insects and so forth and
you just keep going that way. And it it
does I mean

the main issue for me

I mean, I can I can accept the idea that
animals uh have rebirth and that there
is a kind of evolution
go through via rebirth.

But, like I was mentioning in the
previous video for a human to go back to
being an insect

I really don't see

how there'd be enough similarity in the
mind of a human and the mind of an

insect

for a human with all this complexity,
kind of crude compared to a deva maybe,
but still compared to an insect, we are
just vastly orders of magnitude beyond
an insect in like mental complexity and
mental force. So, I don't think it would
all fit into a mosquito.

So,

um there I have read a a strange theory
in a book called the Set uh Seth Speaks
where like a part of your
uh karmic stream can break off and be
and it's you got this little spark of
your karmic stream splitting off and
becoming an animal, something like that.

But, um

yeah, I I have uh no doubt that it has

been taught in Buddhism

since very early times, even if the

Buddha himself didn't talk about it. The

texts have the Buddha talking about it.

And it's it's back as far as some of the

earlier Upanishads in in uh Hinduism or

Brahmanism, Vedism.

So,

uh here's one one question, sub-question

here. What are the causes which led them

to be born in the animal realm? It's

just having an animalistic mind,

especially at the moment of death.

You know, if you're just completely

controlled by lust or or something like

that, um you know, some sort of animalistic greed, you know, hunger for you're just obsessed with food or something, then according to traditional orthodox Buddhism, that having like animalistic urges and to an extreme degree will have you be reborn as an animal.

It's like if you die with the mind of a the mind of an angel, you get reborn as an angel. You die with the mind of an animal, you get reborn as an animal. You die with the mind of a of a denizen of hell, you get reborn as a denizen of hell, so to speak.

So,

that's kind of how it works, or at least that's how it's supposed to work.

So, I think I'll just move on to the next question. This is also from uh Achala.

In the Mahayana worldview, there's a common understanding Nibbana and Samsara are the same thing, which is based on Nagarjuna's words. From a Theravada view, it doesn't make sense since Nibbana doesn't lie in the realm of Samsara. It is the unconditioned, while Samsara is the conditioned existence.

What is view on it? Thank you. Um I'm really not 100% sure that it is based on Nagarjuna. I think Nagarjuna

pretty much could have agreed with it if to the extent that he would have asserted anything. I mean, Nagarjuna's philosophy just just like attacks all assertions and then after it attacks after it destroys all other assertions, it just like turns the knife on itself and and commits ritual suicide and you wind up with no assertions whatsoever.

Um it could have gone back to like um Prajnaparamita or Prajnaparamita. The There was like a an early movement in in Mahayana Buddhism uh which would include like the Diamond Cutter and uh the Heart Sutra and that

sort of thing.

It could have It could go back to that.

Um which I think is earlier than

Nagarjuna, but I'm

I'm no authority on the subject.

Um but really, um I've talked about this

before. The whole idea that Nirvana and

Samsara are the same

to an orthodox Theravada Buddhist, most

orthodox Theravada Buddhists would just

snort with derision at the very idea.

They're like opposites. But I can accept

that Nirvana and Samsara I mean, you can

look at it as essence and form. Like

I've I've talked about this before, you

know, like the gold ring, you know, the

essence is gold and ring is the form of

it. And Samsara is the world of forms. I mean, even the form the so-called formless realm is still there's still some kind of mental form there even if it's not physical.

So, you can see Nirvana as just the essence of ultimate reality and Samsara are like the the mirages or illusions or just the the superficial semi-real conditional forms that are conditionally co-arising.

In accordance with paticcasamuppada or dependent co-arising. Or there was one person on the the Discord server where this question was asked who said that Nibbana is you know the universe

uh as seen through enlightened eyes and
Samsara is the very same universe as
seen through unenlightened eyes.

Which is another sensible way of
explaining it.

So

I mean if you have perfect eyes, you see
everything as perfect, so to speak.

That's not orthodox Theravada, though.

So I'm I'm deviating from orthodoxy by

uh

answering this question because if I
were strictly orthodox, I would just
snort at in derision

at the very idea that Nibbana and
Samsara are the same.

Because, you know, going with like

Abhidhamma, for example, they're they're obviously are not the same. They're just qualitatively different.

Because Nibbana is one ultimate reality and all the rest of the ultimate realities, and there's lots of them, are all aspects of Samsara.

So

um yeah, I mean, either of the the two earlier um explanations I gave that Nibbana is just the the ultimately real essence

which transcends the duality even of existence and non-existence, so it's paradoxical.

And Samsara is just the form, the

outward, you know, apparent forms
of like an imperfect
mind or an unenlightened mind trying to
make sense of reality.

But sense itself is Samsara.

So I guess I answered that one. So we'll
just move on to the next question. This
is from Crazy Librarian.

And Crazy Librarian says

do Hindus have history of taking some
inspiration from Buddhism and put it in
their scriptures, I thought they are
older.

Well, Hinduism itself,

I mean, in the Buddha's time, it wasn't
really Hinduism yet. You know, it's it
was hardly even proto-Hinduism. It was

just sort of Vedic Brahmanism. That
Hinduism, if you if you trace its
evolution, it goes back to the
proto-Indo-European
like paganism or polytheism that was not
particularly mystical,
not particularly metaphysical, that it
was mainly
sacrificing to the gods for worldly
benefits, like sons, cattle, and victory
in battle.

And then gradually, as it came into
India, you know, the parts of the
Rigveda were supposedly uh composed
before the Indo-Aryans even made it into
India. You know, their worship of of

like the Vedic gods pre-dated their entry into India, their invasion or settlement or whatever.

And um then they came in contact with a very

strange spiritual culture

um based on the Indus Valley

civilization, I'm pretty sure. It was

like the Shramanic tradition. And

they started absorbing a lot of ideas

from this earlier tradition just through

osmosis, just you know, cultural

in interaction, I suppose.

So,

um

they around the Buddha's time, they a

little bit before the Buddha's time,

they started up with the Upanishads.

They started composing Upanishads.

Which is like the the Vedanta, which literally means the end of the Vedas, you know, it's the last part of the Vedas, presumably the the the culmination of the Vedas with regard to wisdom and profundity.

And then after that there was non non-Vedic scriptures started like Puranas and um

like the Bhagavad Gita, which is now considered to be one of the main Hindu scriptures.

Um which technically isn't even canonical scripture because it's not in

the Vedas.

So, um as

as this Vedic Brahmanism sort of moved southwards into southern India, it became more and more devotional, more and more emphasis on certain gods rather than some of the Vedic gods. Like the two main Vedic gods were Indra and Agni, and they've pretty much faded out. It's mainly um the two main gods in India nowadays among the the Hindus are Vishnu and Shiva.

I think most Hindus in India would be either Vaishnavites or Shaivites.

Um but yeah, there was a lot of interaction between Buddhism and this Vedic

into Hindu stream, this this this continuum, I guess you can call it. I mean, you can't really call it Hinduism back in the Buddhist time, proto-Hinduism or whatever.

So, um yeah, it was like uh Shankara who was uh wrote some of the most important commentary on the Upanishads and uh is considered to be one of the founding fathers of Advaita Vedanta. He supposedly got a lot of his ideas from Madhyamaka Buddhism, which is a kind of Mahayana Buddhism.

Um also, the Hindu emphasis on non-killing or ahimsa, you know, why Hindus tend to be uh vegetarian or you

know, they don't they don't even kill insects, supposedly. They Apparently, that was also from Buddhist influence.

But um Buddhism also got a a lot of influence from proto-Hinduism.

Um especially with a lot of the terminology, you know, the idea of of karma and and the the Brahman and this

most of the Buddhist terminology is derived from

Sanskrit. You know, Sanskrit philosophical terminology.

Maybe not all of it, but most of it.

So, there was a lot of back and forth and that was a good thing, I think.

There was a lot of relatively peaceful

debate going on between different philosophical schools. Now, within Buddhism, within the Vedic traditions, and also other traditions, the Jains, the Ajivikas, other other sects. And they were not only debating, you know, among themselves, but like with the different sects.

And it strengthened each each school. The ones that survived, you know, they they endured the purifying fire of everyone pitching at them essentially. Just like finding fault with their arguments.

Because, I mean, if you're debating with other people, you have to have a

relatively strong foundation.

You know, you have to have have a point of view that can stand up to scrutiny and and like critical attack.

And I used to always consider that. I mean, it's

I mean, what's the point of having a point of view that really cannot stand up to scrutiny and criticism.

I mean, if you have to protect your point of view, like

I think Christianity really went went this other route where it's just like just shut down all debate, shut down all, you know, all dissension, all deviation from orthodoxy. Because it makes them feel really uncomfortable

when people are just

like poking holes in their theology or

whatever.

So, it would in India, you know, there

was a lot of this debate and like honing

their their positions

that

it really strengthened the spiritual

tradition in India, I think.

Um and it really is praiseworthy that

for the most part they got along like

Nalanda University. It was all these

different schools of Buddhism. They They

did their ceremonies separately. They

had different ecclesiastical boundaries

for the different schools.

But, um still they'd come together and study together and debate relatively non-violently.

You know, it didn't didn't devolve into brawls or anything like that.

So, yeah, it went both ways. I think mostly

uh with regard to philosophy, it was Mahayana Buddhism and Hinduism that were influencing each other a lot. Although, like I said, it was even early Buddhism like the the Buddha himself

uh is largely responsible for Hindus adopting ahimsa and stopping doing animal sacrifices and just starting to pour melted butter and honey and incense and things onto the fire for

their for their sacrifices.

So, I think I'll just move on to the next question here.

And this is from Hey It's Tig.

And Hey It's Tig says,

"I've read that yogis are forbidden from eating garlic and onions. Does the Vinaya Pitaka also prohibit monks from consuming these and related foods?"

Well, onions are okay for a monk, but there is a rule against monks eating raw garlic unless they are sick.

And I guess the the sto- the origin story, which I haven't read in many years, but if I remember correctly, um there was a congregation of monks

listening to the Buddha's sermon and one of the monks had eaten raw garlic and was kind of grossing out the people around him that was that were smelling his breath. And so, the Buddha right then and there made a rule that monks are not not allowed to eat raw garlic unless they are sick.

So,

but that's as far as it goes. Onions is no problem. Although, I have read there was a Chinese pilgrim, he was a Buddhist like during the Middle Ages, early Middle Ages, who traveled to India looking for

um

as yet untranslated scriptures,
scriptures that had not yet been
translated from Indian languages into
Chinese.

And um he said that uh the people of
northern India were devout Mahayana
Buddhists who did not eat meat or garlic
or onions. So,
at some point Buddhists
uh especially Mahayana Buddhists stopped
eating meat, garlic, and onions,
although um
a Theravada Buddhist is allowed to eat
all of them
if the garlic is cooked or if he is
sick, he can eat raw garlic.

Um let's see here. I want to do justice to this garlic question. I read that yogis have been reading garlic and onions. Yeah, and later ideas about how garlic and onions are like um like the the the three guna idea of different foods, you know, you've got sattvic foods which are conducive to wisdom, like uh grains, dairy products, nuts, fruits, and then you got rajasic foods that are that cause passion, like meat and spicy food, and then you've got tamasic food, which uh uh tend towards like inertia, lethargy, um just sort of semi-consciousness, and I think I'm not sure what garlic and onions would be. They'd be one of the

two lesser ones. They're not sattvic foods.

Um I think mushrooms are considered to be the classic uh tamasic, darkness-inducing food.

So,

yeah, I I don't think that that was really a factor in in early Buddhism.

Just the idea of this food, you know, produces this kind of energy that is bad for your spirit or something. That hadn't evolved yet in Indian philosophy.

It's

It's mentioned a lot in the Bhagavad Gita because it was um sort of a pre

pre-Buddhist, pre-Hindu uh school of philosophy called Samkhya that had this the three gunas.

And then they were kind of working out this theory and it got adopted into um

into Hinduism as yoga.

And it's there's a lot of it represented in the Bhagavad Gita, also.

But um

I think I'll just move on to the next question here. And this is from Stevie.

And Stevie says,

"How does alms round actually work? Can you please walk us through every step from the time you leave until the time you cleaned your bowl? Is there a

standard time villages are supposed to look for monks? If not, how do they know what time to look for you? Thank you."

Um

well,

with regard to this last part first, is there a standard time? It's definitely morning. Monks are only allowed to eat between dawn and midday. So, it would definitely be in the morning.

And my experience in Burma

or and also to some a degree in Thailand is that there's just like a standard time for monks to go for alms in different areas. Like in the cities, it might be a little later. In the out in

the villages where you got subsistence farmers that get up at the crack of dawn, it might be just right after dawn when, you know, people are up and cooking their food.

But generally, monks go around the time that people are cooking breakfast.

Which may be anywhere between

like dawn and maybe like

9:00 in the morning. Although, there are some monasteries and just monks in some areas will eat two meals a day.

They might have the early meal, the so-called dawn meal, just delivered to the monastery, and then they might go later like 10:00, 10:30, something like that.

So, uh usually it's just a like a
standardized

time locally, you know, in this village,
you know, the monks go to a certain time
or, you know, in in Rangoon or whatever.
So, um yeah, but it's always sometime in
the morning.

And see, the time you leave, um yeah,
well, I mean, when when a monk enters
the village, he's got to have both
shoulders covered. And usually it's it's
wrapped in a certain way. And I used to
try and go for alms just completely
according to the book, and almost nobody
does this anymore.

For example,

in the Buddha's time, there were no bowl lids. Nowadays, almost all monks will have this lid to their bowl. And then, if people offer them something that doesn't mix good, you know, like a package of cookies or something, a lot of time they'll just put it on top of the bowl. Sometimes, um monks in Burma will have like little curry cups on top of the bowl lid. And then, people want to offer curry, you know, some kind of sauce or something goopy, they'll put it in the little cup so it doesn't all get mixed together in the glop. But, they didn't have bowl lids in the Buddha's time. There's no mention of them in Vinaya. And so, the

way a monk was supposed to go for alms, he'd go into the village, both shoulders covered. If his bowl was in a bag, he has to take it out of the bag before he enters the village.

And then, he holds the bowl under his robe. And anyone who has seen like video old videos of me as a monk in Burma, I mean, I look like I'm 9 months pregnant cuz I'm holding my bowl underneath my robe. That's like the bowl lid. And you have to be careful not to get goop on the inside of your robe because if the bowl gets filled too full, then it's easy to get glop on your robe.

And then what a monk is supposed to do,

I mean, he walks through the village,
he's got to have both shoulders covered
before he enters the village, he's got
the bowl taken out of any bag that it
was in,
and then he's holding the bowl with both
hands, he's got to look downwards,
I mean, just like 6 ft in front of him,
you know, eyes downcast, and he walks
quietly through the village. And if he
gets to a house, he stops for a few
seconds. And then according to the the
rules of monastic discipline, they've
got instructions on this.

It says, you know, the monk stops for a
little while, but if she stands up from
her work or she starts wiping off a

spoon or she starts wiping off a bowl, then that's pretty good indication that she's getting ready to offer something, and so the monk is allowed to stand a little bit longer.

Um you know, in the past as well as in as nowadays, it's usually women who offer food to monks. So, that's why it's, you know, it says she if she does this or if she does that cuz there's usually women who are offering food.

Um

so then out here, what he's supposed to do, and almost nobody does this anymore because now they have bullets and all that. But what

he's supposed to do is he's supposed to lift up his robe to to get the bowl out with one hand, then he holds out the the bowl, I think with his he's supposed to use his right hand. I was left-handed, so

with regard to alms round anyway. So, I kind of did it the opposite. But you're supposed to lift up the robe with your left hand, hold out the bowl with your right hand until it's free of the robe, then you hold the bowl with both hands, and respectfully just keep your eyes on the food when when people are putting the food in. And you're not supposed to make any faces, you're not supposed to turn down anything unless it's

obviously, you know, not allowable. You know, if they try to offer you money or something, a monk is not supposed to allow that. Some wise guy is going to put like dog crap in your bowl. I mean, you have to accept that. Um but I mean, I've accepted some pretty gross stuff. And I mean, you're not allowed to say anything. I mean, you you just have to keep a poker face. You just accept it respectfully. You know, it could be like some little old lady whose eyesight isn't good anymore. This happened to me a lot. She put a piece of cake into my bowl that was just swarming with ants. You know, there's little ants

all over it. She can't see the ants cuz she doesn't have glasses. Her eyesight isn't good anymore. Um I've had rotten food put into my bowl with like maggots in it.

And I mean, you just accept it. You don't know what it it's fried bugs, you know, little little fried little frogs or something. You just

Or or sometimes, you know, you got a nice piece of cake sitting over on one side of the bowl. And then some some lady will come and just pour soup all over it. And you're not allowed to say anything. You're not allowed to do anything. Or or like and this happened more than once. You've

got

um like some some woman just blows her nose into her hand and just kind of flings the snot off and then offers food with the same hand. Or you've got some little kid who's just coughing He's just coughing and and sneezing or whatever right into the food. No concept of hygiene. And then puts the food into your bowl. You have to accept all of it. Someone with leprosy offers you food, you just accept it. In fact, there's a famous story. I think it's Kassapa's versus in the uh the uh the Theragatha. Where he's talking about how he was

going for alms and a leper a
a beggar with leprosy saw him and he
looked so majestic majestic that this
this leper was inspired to offer him
some of his own food. So, he goes up
kind of humbly and timidly and
wants to offer food into Mahakassapa's
bowl. Mahakassapa, fully enlightened,
also he's the great disciple who was the
most strict with regard to ascetic
practice. You know, he calmly accepts
and the leper
when he's putting a handful of food from
his own bowl into Mahakasyapa's bowl uh
one of his fingertips breaks off and
lands in the bowl.
And Mahakasyapa does not raise an

eyebrow.

And you know, he just continues on his way.

And the the beggar with leprosy is following along to see what Mahakasyapa is going to do cuz he's he's mortified at this. And Mahakasyapa when he gets enough food, he just sits down. He doesn't even take the fingertip out of the bowl. He just moves it over to one side and just eats his meal.

And that was that story or those verses were um it was recommended reading. One of my teachers advised me to read that and take it to heart you know, when I go for alms cuz that's you know, that's

like a role model.

So, anyway

when you got enough food

you just go back out of the the village

and

sit down wherever it's convenient for

you to sit down.

I mean, there's dining halls in a lot of

monasteries. I would just sit in front

of my cave

and um or my sit in my hut or whatever.

Generally, you don't want to eat inside

your hut because there's so many ants in

the tropics that you drop one crumb and

there's going to be a whole legion of

them looking for a second crumb.

Um

and then after you eat
you've got any leftovers, you feed the
scrawny dog that's hanging out or you
know, you go and feed the crows and the
squirrels and then the wild chickens or
whatever and
wash your bowl. Generally, uh got a big
clay water pot
just for washing bowls and so forth and
that's pretty much it.

Um I mean, the way it's done nowadays
isn't necessarily the way it was done in
in Buddha's time and it's not the way
that is recommended in the text. Like um
I suppose even in the Buddha's time
there may have been long lines of monks

going for alms together. I usually went by myself.

But

long lines of monks just silently walking through the villages or through the city, you know, their eyes downcast, and people just standing there waiting to offer food. I really couldn't do house by house alms round in certain places because I'd start getting too famous, and you just get right to the alms route to the village, and there'd be this line of, you know, 40, 50, sometimes over 100 people wanting to offer food. So, I couldn't really go house by house alms round.

Um I mean, I could have insisted upon it

and been kind of a dick, but I just figured, well, this is making sure everyone who wants to offer food is here because sometimes you go house by house, you got somebody eagerly waiting to offer you food halfway through the village, your bowl fills up before you get that far, you just have to turn around, come back, and then they don't get to offer anything.

So,

I guess that's how I mean, I think I've answered this question. There might be something important that I'm leaving out, but that is how alms round works. It's just every morning if a monk wants

to eat something, I mean, traditionally,
he uh you know,
has to cover both shoulders,
takes his alms bowl, walks through the
village, anyone who wants to offer food
can offer the food. When he gets enough,
he leaves and sits down and eats it.

And uh there is a verse in the
Dhammapada saying that a monk going for
alms is like uh a bee going from flower
to flower. You know, the bee just takes
a little bit from each flower, and it
doesn't cause any harm or hardship to
any of the flowers.

And that's the way it's supposed to be.
You know, it might be, especially if you
got a long line of 100 people, each

person just gets to put in one spoon of rice, one maybe one spoon of curry. And of course you're going to have like the the wise guys who are like trying to cheat and like balance a banana on the spoon or they bring some huge serving spoon from home or something.

So, yeah, it's it was nice. I really like going for alms round, especially at first. I was very grateful. The first time I went for alms round was in Bangkok. I mean, a real alms round. They had sort of like a or imitation alms round at the monastery in California where I was ordained, where they'd ring the bell at like 10:30

or so, and the monks would file past the kitchen building and people would offer food, but um

it wasn't exactly the same as just going out into this town or village and having total strangers offering food to you.

And now, I really liked that. It was nice.

So, I'll just move on to the next question here. And this is from

Hrym Kthul, Hyrym Kthul. I don't know how to pronounce this name.

And uh H R Y M K T H U L says,

"Do you plan to publish your father's autobiography? If so, when? I would love to read it." Yeah, um there was a recent blog post on my blog that included

chapter one of my father's spiritual autobiography.

And um

it's one of the only things that I inherited from my father or one of the only material things that I inherited from my father after he died was his writings.

And

I I took about half of it, you know, the best half, and typed it into the computer, which I still have.

The other half was in a box. I went to Burma. It was stored in a monastery in California. When I come back to that monastery a few years later, the

building that the the box was in is gone. The box is gone. Nobody knows where it is. So, about half of what my father wrote that I got just disappeared.

Um just through

I don't know.

Carelessness or something. I'm not sure.

But, the thing is, um, my father's spiritual autobiography was was like written on like stenographer's tablets. Just steno pads. And I had to transcribe it into the computer in digital form. And apparently one of the steno pads was missing.

And so, I would have to write the that chapter filling in the gaps, which

fortunately was during my lifetime when I was a kid. So, I can I can remember a lot of the stuff that my father would have written like um, there was a an Uncle Henry who was a a freed slave owned by Well, before he was before he was freed, he was owned by one of my my great-great-grandfathers, I think. And then after he was freed, he just stayed and just they lived together and they were they were like best friends.

Um,

but um, when I was a kid presumably the the story goes that Uncle Henry, um, was like haunting our house.

And my little brother, who was like maybe 5 years old at the time, could see him. I couldn't see him. My father couldn't see him. My little brother would be talking about this black man who was in the house. And during the daytime, if he saw him, you know, he'd say, "Don't sit there. Um, you know, the the man is sitting there." He just called it, you know, his man or the man. Um, but if he saw him at night, he'd uh he'd get really scared. So, my father was going to seances at that time. He trained spirit mediums. And uh uh, Uncle Henry would come through sometimes. And he asked Uncle Henry if he was hanging around the house. Uncle

Henry said, "Yes." And he asked him, you know, "Please, you know, just don't don't try you know, don't scare the kid." So, it kind of it kind of fixed the problem, I think. But, as I'm saying, um

I would have to not only edit this, but I would have to supply a missing chapter in order to publish my father's spiritual or occult autobiography. It's It's well worth reading. He's He lived an interesting life.

But, um

I mean, I've gotten enough material for probably three books at least, and uh I just lack the time and energy as a as a

householder who has to work full-time
to

like edit books. I edited three during
the months between

um me dropping out of the monkhood and
starting work at a sheet metal shop.

But, now that I'm working at a sheet
metal shop, I'd have to like take at
least a week off

and just dedicate that time not to,
you know, hanging out with my sweetheart
or going on vacation or anything, but
locking myself in a room and editing.

And, uh

yeah, I mean, there's a good chance it's
going to happen sooner or later, but I
don't know when.

So, I'll just move on to the next question here. Um I specialize in long answers to short questions.

And, this question is from Jeremy.

And, uh Jeremy says, "Are you familiar with Bhikkhu Sujato and his site SuttaCentral? What do you think of his translations?"

I'm really not familiar with Bhikkhu Sujato and his site SuttaCentral. He apparently has some familiarity with me because I've been told that any mention of me or of my Atthakatha commentary translation is deleted from his his website because

he's like a far leftist, apparently, and he considers me to be like a Nazi.

And so, you know, I'm just like banned from his website for like from the forum part of it, you know, and any mention of me gets deleted or so I've been told.

I've looked this very I've given it a few cursory glances,

but I've never I'm I don't remember reading any of his translations or anything like that. So, I really can't really comment other than what I've already commented.

So, I'll just move on to the next question. This is from Seo Vaksh and Seepod Zeedona.

And Seo Vaksh and Seepod Zeedona says,

"You mentioned walking and sitting meditation, but what about standing and lying meditation?"

And then in parentheses, he's got lion's posture.

Well,

lying meditation doesn't work very good.

There are some people who can do it, but as a general rule, if you lie down and try to meditate, you you you get sleepy.

You know, it's just it's like your mind has associated lying down with just being relaxed and sleepy, and so it's really easy to just fall asleep if you're trying to meditate in a prone or just

recumbent horizontal position.

With regard to standing meditation,

um

there was one Burmese sayadaw, Taungpulu Sayadaw, who specialized in standing meditation.

And one problem with standing meditation is I mean, you get into sort of an altered mental state, you can fall down easy. And every once in a while at the at the retreat, I went to a Taungpulu meditation retreat, and every once in a while you just hear this thump where someone just falls over.

But, one thing about sitting or standing meditation is after like

20 minutes or so, the the soles of your

feet are just on fire.

I mean, you're standing motionless, you know, sort of like sitting motionless.

Gradually, you get uncomfortable, and mainly from the standing posture, it's just the soles of your feet just get hot and start burning.

Um

And then all of the advantages that Tan Te Dorees Sayadaw gave for standing meditation were all like health things.

You know, it wasn't anything spiritual.

It was like you'll never get a stroke in your life and this kind of thing.

So,

I think walking and sitting are the two

best positions for for meditation.

Um

I'm not uh sure if it's there's any symbolic value to it, but uh Venerable Ananda, who is the the Buddha's attendant,

he was spending so much time attending to the Buddha that he didn't have enough time to practice diligently. And so, at the time of the Buddha's death, he himself was not yet enlightened. But then, it was getting close to the first council where the monks were going to get together, where you know, the the chief monks in the Sangha were going to get together and discuss what to do now that the Buddha is gone.

And he was the only one, according to the story, which is canonical, that he was the only one who was not enlightened yet.

And so, he was just doing strenuous meditation, just sitting, walking, sitting, walking until finally one night, it may have even been the eve of the first great council, he uh

he just I don't know if he actually gave up, but he was just getting so tired. He figured he better just lie down and go to sleep. And just as he was in the transition between sitting and lying down, he sits down on his cot or a mat

or whatever, and then he's in like this transitional sort of 45° between horizontal and vertical, you know, while he's in the act of lying down mindfully, he became enlightened.

So, I mean, that has nothing to do with the question, but it it reminded me of that. Just sort of meditation or uh spiritual advancement in you know, other than the standard sitting or walking.

Um some monks, I assume, become enlightened through standing like um,

there is a story in the commentaries about a monk who was meditating on on bones. You know, there's the 32 parts of

the body, and if one of one of the 32 parts, which includes arti or bones, um, it's uh it really resonates with you, you can just specialize on that. So, a monk, um,

was just seeing everyone as bones, you know, it's just seeing skeletons. I I think

I think it was like Ajahn Mun Ajahn Maha Boowa went through a stage, also, um, where they just they were meditating on bones so much. They were just seeing walking skeletons. They were just seeing people as as bones. But, um, there was this young woman came up to him, and she's sort of

like flirting with him, or just being sort of coarse coarse and vulgar with this monk, and she's laughing. And when she opens her mouth and is laughing, he sees her teeth, sees those as bones, and it somehow just caused this click where he became enlightened.

Just, uh, seeing this laughing woman's teeth as bones.

Um,

but, yeah, I think I answered that question. I'll just move on to Seevolux N Seepad Zidanus' question. Um, sometimes I'm answering questions that nobody asked, but I guess that's okay, too, cuz it's my show.

And I can I can answer anything I want to.

So, Seevolux N Seepad Zidanus says, "If nuns weren't allowed to sit cross-legged, how did they do sitting meditation?"

Well, that's uh
that's a sensible question.

And the way they were supposed to sit is the way

well-mannered, demure Burmese ladies are supposed to sit. You don't sit cross-legged. That's considered to be unladylike in Burma. They sit with both feet kind of tucked into one side. So, it's it's not good for posture because

when you got both feet tucked to one side as I'm indicating even now, you're kind of leaning to one side and then you have to kind of compensate. And so, it's not really ideal for meditation, but that is how bhikkhunis are supposed to sit in meditation and I doubt that there's very many of these new bhikkhunis that actually do that because they're not really interested in following the rules strictly despite insisting on being recognized as fully ordained.

But, we don't need to get into that. So, we'll just move on to the next question. Also by Seevali and See Pad Z Dinah. And he says,

"What is sammāsati

actually supposed to mean? I hear that it technically means memory and that someone who isn't Someone who is born satīman means they remember their past life.

Vipassana practitioners claim

it is

bare awareness on the objects of the four foundations of mindfulness. And in some places

I've seen sati be used synonymously with heedfulness. With all these conflicting definitions, it's hard to know what sammāsati is supposed to actually mean.

Well, you the non-philosophical

meaning of the sati in Pali is memory,
but it doesn't mean um usually doesn't
mean memory in uh in Buddhist philosophy
unless it's like anusati or like
recollection of like the the qualities
of the Buddha or something. That would
be a kind of memory.

Or remembering what you've been told
about the qualities of the Buddha
anyway.

Um

but

um if you if you read the
Mahasatipatthana Sutta, it defines the
Noble Eightfold Path. You know, each
step of the Noble Eightfold Path is
defined in an orthodox and authoritative

manner.

So, if you look up sammāsati, and I didn't do this, but I I'm pretty sure my memory serves me correctly that it's just it goes over the four foundations of mindfulness, the four satipatthana.

So,

that would be right mindfulness in

Theravada Buddhism would be

the four the four satipatthana, the four foundations of mindfulness. Which is,

you know, mindfulness of the body,

mindfulness of feelings, mindfulness of

mind, and mindfulness of dhammas. And

that mindfulness of dhammas is

controversial. It's it's controversial

to this day. Sometimes it's

it's uh

interpreted as mindfulness of mental states, or it can also mean mindfulness of just certain philosophical points.

But, you can you can work that out for yourself.

Uh

But, if you want to know the like the standard orthodox interpretation of samasati, you I'd look it up um in the Mahasatipatthana Sutta, which is in the Digha Nikaya.

And I'm pretty sure they they're just going to give the standard uh explanation of the the four foundations of mindfulness.

So, let's move on to see what Vacca has to say about his next question.

Uh and that is, "It is said that in the first council, the venerable Ananda recited the suttas from memory, and the venerable Upali recited the Vinaya in the presence of 500 arahants. However, you have to said you don't think much of the suttas or Vinaya date back to the Buddha himself. So, what do you think actually happened during the historical first council?"

Um I think what probably happened was the monks got together after the Buddha passed away, and they had to set up certain protocols. Like, you know, when

the Buddha was alive, he would just say,
you know, "Ehi bhikkhu." You know,
"Come, monk." And that would that would
be good enough. I mean, the monk would
the person would be considered ordained
as a monk. But now that the Buddha
wasn't alive anymore, you know, they had
to set up protocols for like ordination
procedure and just ecclesiastical
matters. And I would guess that the
Patimokkha rules, the the like the core
227

rule No, not the 227. There's like 152.
All of the Patimokkha except for the
Sekhiya rules
would be
um probably laid down at the first

council.

Um different schools of Buddhism had different Sekhiya rules. There was a lot of variation in the last section of rules. They're very minor rules. They're the most minor rules.

But with regard to the rules before that,

there's very close similarity. So,

um

it may be that there was some suttas

also added. Not all of them, but um

Yeah, it's it's hard to say. I can't

really say with regard to the sutta

part, but I think that the first council

was mainly with regard to monastic

discipline and just setting out like protocols, rules for ordination, and so forth. And some In some places, the first council is referred to as the Vinaya Sangiti, which is, you know, the the convocation on monastic discipline.

And you just read the origin story of how the first council arose. It was after the Buddha passed away into parinirvana, you know, after he disappeared from samsara.

Um most of the monks Well, the enlightened monks, you know, they were stoic. You know, they they were serene. The unenlightened monks were mostly very sad. And even Ananda was was pretty

messed He was There There's one scene where he's just leaning against a pillar crying.

But there's one old monk who was ordained when he was old, who's like, "Hey, why all the long faces? Now we don't have venerable Gotama saying do this, don't do that all the time. We can do what we want. And Mahakassapa, who was the senior monk in the Sangha at the time, heard that and he was kind of alarmed at this and he you know he had the idea, "We're going to have to do something about this." And so even the the origin of the first council, even according to

orthodox tradition, if you read between the lines, it was to set up monastic discipline. And if you read really old texts like the Atthakavagga, the Buddha actually warns against, you know, clinging to sets of rules and so forth.

But I mean

you you have to have rules if the organization isn't just going to disintegrate

over time once the charismatic

charismatic enlightened founder is gone, you know, things just kind of dissipate unless you have some kind of structure and order

to keep things in place and I think that was what the the

the main purpose of the first council was just getting this order for the Sangha established to to keep things going in a relatively stable manner.

And there may have been some philosophical points added also, but I think the philosophical stuff was already it was sort of taken care of in a in a sort of a different venue.

But I don't know for sure. It's really hard to say. But it is pretty clear just from the texts that the main purpose of the first council was monastic discipline.

And that would include probably at the very least, as I say,

just ordination procedures and so forth.

And also the the the core of the

Patimokkha rules, all except for the the

Sekhiya rules, which are just sort of

like

good manners. You know, it's like uh

what's the word?

Uh

there's this word I'm trying to think

of.

Etiquette.

They're like rules of etiquette, like

don't talk with your mouth full of food.

That kind of thing.

So,

I guess I answered that one as well as

I'm able cuz I mean to some degree we

just can't know.

Because Buddhist chronicles, ancient Indian chronicles in general are not entirely reliable.

So, we'll just move on to Sevaka and Sipad Zidana's next question, which is

in the sutras it says that doing metta meditation will lead to the following, quote, one sleeps easily, wakes easily, dreams no evil dreams, one is dear to human beings, dear to non-human beings, the devas protect one, neither fire, poison, or weapons can touch one, one's mind gains concentration quickly, one's complexion is bright, one dies

unconfused, and if penetrating no higher
is headed for the Brahma worlds,
unquote.

Do you think this is true? Cuz if it is
true, it is way more
overpowered compared to other meditation
techniques.

Um

if you do metta meditation correctly and
you got genuine metta, I mean you're not
just going through may all beings be
well, may all beings be happy, just just
reciting it like you're reading from a
phone book. Um if it's like sincere,
you're actually
generating this beaming metta in all
directions, you know, you're beaming

thoughts of brotherly love in all directions, then um yeah, at least you're going to be taking some major steps in the directions of these benefits that uh Sevaka and Sipad Zidana has quoted here.

You're more likely to sleep easily, you're more likely to wake easily, you're less likely to have nightmares, more likely to be dear to human beings and dear to non-human beings. I mean, if you're just beaming love, you know, animals are going to like you more, people are going to like you more. Um, this neither fire, poison, or weapons can touch you. I don't think

that means that you're bulletproof or that, you know, someone's going to be shooting at you and always missing or something, but you're just less likely to have

uh bad things happen to you cuz you're going to have better karma.

Um,

so I think,

you know, I mean, if you perfected this brotherly love towards all beings in the universe,

um,

yeah, I think you'd have a really good karma and uh

I mean, still you you're going to have past karma that's going to come up, but

I think you'd be taking some major steps in this direction even if it's not 100% literally true.

So,

um, yeah, I mean, love is pretty powerful.

So, I'll just move on to the next question here.

Also by COVaxin CpodZ now.

You have said a monk doesn't want to make positive karma either. However, in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, the Buddha says to Ananda that he has made a lot of merit and that he will quickly achieve the goal. Doesn't that imply merit helps even a monk reach the goal? Well, it

helps you to move in that direction.

It I mean, the merit isn't going to get you enlightened. I mean, that's the main point.

That no action is going to get you enlightened because

if

if your enlightenment is the result of action, it's going to be conditioned and impermanent and it's not going to be genuine enlightenment.

So, it's paradox it's a paradoxical state and it may be

meaningless within the same sorry

context with in that regard. Guys, if I

remember correctly, there's somebody

asks me about this a little later.

Um,

so I mean, you can

how do I explain this?

I mean, I've explained this before.

It's like

sort of like Krishnamurti says, you

know, you can open the window, but you

can't make the breeze blow in. I mean,

you can get as ready as possible for it

to happen, but you can't make it happen.

So, you get yourself clear, you know,

you get yourself wise, you know, you

kind of clean up your your karma so that

isn't happening and distracting you

and and just

disturbing your meditation all the time,

you know, and you just get your mind as clear and as peaceful as possible, and then it increases the odds of enlightenment, but there is no guarantee whatsoever.

But, the Buddha I mean, the Buddha is saying to Ananda that he will quickly achieve the goal he had just been prophesying rather than going with uh the he made a lot of merit. See, he has made a lot of merit and that he will quickly achieve the goal. Um you know, the the merit

I mean, it it kind of gets you ready to achieve the goal, but again, it

I mean, you do not become enlightened as the result of merit or as the result of

any action.

Which is paradoxical.

So, I think I'll just move on to Suvajra
and see Pat Zidana's next question.

Which is, "What do you think of the
psychic powers in the sutras?

Like mind reading, levitating,
teleportation,

being at many places at once,
traveling to other dimensions, etc. I
know you believe in the paranormal, but
these are deliberate

These are deliberate uses of psychic
powers on their own?"

Um

yeah, most of the psychic powers on the

standard list of psychic powers I can accept, you know, like walking on water, you know, Jesus didn't have a monopoly on that. It was it was mentioned long before Jesus was born as something that is the result of you know, intensive spiritual practice, especially if you cultivate jhana.

Um

Yeah, levitation, flying through the air, teleportation, just disappearing in one place, reappearing in another place, which is apparently how the devas just That's just their standard mode of of traveling. They just disappear in one place and reappear where somewhere else. Um being in many places at once, yeah.

Um a lot of these Neem Karoli Baba had a reputation for doing a lot of these, especially the teleportation and the being in many places at once.

And also he did some of the It's called the Annapurna in in Hinduism in India, which is like the miracle of the loaves and the fishes in the Bible where you just take a small amount of food and you just divide it up and just keep keep giving it out and just as as though there is an endless supply of it.

Um

The one psychic power, and I mentioned this in a in a relatively recent Q&A, that I just It takes some difficulty in

swallowing it, is that you're able to reach out and touch and stroke the sun and moon.

And I think the commentaries kind of try and patch that up a bit by saying that you you create like a a replica of the sun and moon or something and then you But Yeah, that one that was a tough one. Reaching out and stroking and caressing the sun and moon.

Um but again, with regard to psychic powers that he says the deliberate use of psychic powers

Um

The more advanced you get, the less deliberate your behavior becomes. You just become more spontaneous, and the

psychic powers just can just flow out of you.

Um like if you're fully enlightened, then really, you know, way nothing is deliberate because you're no longer creating karma. You no longer have like regular human volition.

And so, it's just like like the correct action is just elicited from you spontaneously. And that may include weird like coincidences, which includes miracles.

So, with regard to this question, it's kind of a two-part question for me. Uh yeah,

I can accept that the the psychic powers on the standard list are all possible, except maybe for the reaching out and stroking the sun and moon. I mean, the sun would be pretty hot.

Um I guess you could stroke it at night, but

that was a joke. I made a joke just now.

Let's see. And then the deliberate use of psychic powers. Um deliberate use of psychic powers, I mean, that'll almost be like magic, you know, like like witchcraft or something. But the more spiritual it is, is the more it's just like miracles just spontaneously happen around a spiritually advanced person.

So, I think I'll just move on to the

Seal of Action C Pod Z 800 next

question. And we're we're already over an hour. This is supposed to be like a short one, because this is less than two weeks worth of questions here.

But I digress.

His next question. Also, there is a question Oh, wait. Also, there is mention in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta that mastering the iddhipadas can let one live for the length of the entire universe, the kappa. But the Venerable Buddhaghosa said that when the Buddha said this, he meant only 100 years old, as Maitreya Buddha still had to come. But given that the idea of the Maitreya

Buddha was a later addition, do you think the Buddha could have actually lived for the length of the whole universe with his powers? In the Sarvastivada tradition, they claim Venerable Mahakassapa mastered the iddhipada and is waiting for the Maitreya Buddha in a cave. So, this universe length lifespan seems to be taken more seriously by other traditions. Yeah, a kappa doesn't necessarily mean like an entire lifespan of of this cosmos.

Um so,

yeah, it might be that that Buddhaghosa in the commentaries is right that it that it meant like the full lifespan of

a human instead of dying when he was I
think 85.

Gosh.

But, I I don't think the Buddha could
have actually lived for the length of
the whole universe because I mean the
Earth is going to be absorbed into a a
nova

in a few billion years.

I don't know what the Buddha would be
doing

um you know, if he lived longer than
this Earth.

Maybe and he could get you know,
devas would come scoop him up or
something.

But, um

yeah, I've read about

um

like if you read Autobiography of a Yogi by Paramahansa Yogananda, he's he talks about essentially immortal swamis living in the Himalayas.

But, I mean if you're in a human body, I mean the human body is is just kind of like planned obsolescence. I mean, old age and death are just part of the whole system.

And yeah, the Buddha was getting old. I mean, he wasn't still young when he was you know, before he died when he was in his early 80s. He was still he was getting old.

So, yeah, this could also be

um

just kind of mythology that got added to the Mahaparinibbana Sutta.

And

and maybe a a just a teensy bit of evidence that it it could be just sort of some kind of Indian mythology is that at the first council, Ananda got attacked essentially by seemingly rather spiteful fully enlightened beings at the first council because the Buddha was hinting

that if Ananda just spoke up and urged him to stay alive, he would have stayed alive longer. And Ananda was slow on the

uptake and didn't take the hint. And so then he's getting condemned and blamed by these by the 500 fully enlightened beings or the 499.

Um

any 500

that uh

that that the boot or that Ananda didn't request the Buddha to live longer. And I don't know, just the whole story just seems more like

just it seems more like mythology than than actual objective history.

But who knows? Again, with regard to a lot of this stuff, I mean stuff that was written

mhm literally more than 2,000 years ago.

Uh it's really hard to say exactly what the story is. I mean even I mean stuff that happened not so long ago. I mean with with the the media as it is now, you you can't be sure what happened last year or or yesterday.

And uh I don't think that that the ancient Indian chronicles were a whole lot more reliable than than the mass media today.

So

yeah, it's it's just open to debate what the exact meaning of the Buddha saying that he could live for an entire kappa.

Um

and whether he even really said it or not because it does seem kind of fishy to me.

So I'll just move on to Seal of Ochse and Sipatzinal's next and last question. You said Nirvana might not mean anything in samsara, but doesn't it mean the end of suffering? Yeah, you can interpret it that way, but you can't really comprehend it. I mean how it can happen, how it could possibly even happen, as I've already mentioned, is is paradoxical.

It just doesn't really fit cuz it's it's like off the scale. And so, if you're trying to understand it within the scale,

you know, it's like

within the terms of of of samsara, you

have That's the only way you can

understand anything is in a samsaric way

because you're using samsaric

understanding. You're using like

cogitation.

You know, you're using brain function or

intellect or or even intuition or

something, and it's all samsaric. And

so, you can't really understand samsara.

It It's like a a paradox. It doesn't

make sense.

Um

So, I mean, you can give it an easy

definition like the end of suffering or

the end of delusion. Or I mean, there's
there's different ways of going about
describing it.

Or or even you want to go
the a slightly unorthodox route, you
could say it's, you know, infinite
consciousness, infinite formless
consciousness that's luminous all round,
unmanifest.

But, um
it's all just sort of makeshift as a way
to try to understand what really
ultimately cannot be understood. And so,
any attempt to describing
what can't be understood is definitely
going to be lacking in some respect.
So,

I mean, you can give it some kind of meaning that is satisfactory to most people, but still they're not going to understand what it is.

So, I'll just move on to the next question. This is from word weird flex.

And weird flex says,

"You and I are about the same height, Panyo. I was wondering if you had any advice for us tall guys that struggle to maintain a proper meditative posture. I especially seem to struggle with pain in the ankles, but any tips you might have would be well and truly appreciated. I really didn't know that tall guys have any kind of disadvantage in sitting in

like full lotus or proper meditative posture. I thought it would might even be easier

because I mean someone with short legs would have more difficulty getting the into the full lotus

than someone with longer legs that, you know, you got more to work with or or something.

Um

it's it's kind of could be it's be like a hereditary thing. Like my father could not squat down on his own heels. He couldn't like all the way squat down. He was not very flexible in his legs and I inherited a little bit of that.

Although I eventually got to the point

where I could sit in the full lotus for
a full hour

and uh

you know, what it might start hurting a
bit towards the end.

Um I gave this I gave this story a long
time ago about some old guy I met in San
Francisco. He came to to a talk that I
gave. And he could just flop into the
full lotus. Just I mean, he didn't have
to use his hands. He It's like he could
just sit down and his legs would just go
like this.

And he's just sort of grinning at
everybody saying, "It only hurts for the
first 5 years."

Um

so

I it could just I don't think the tallness itself is really an issue. It It may just be just you don't have very flexible legs and um the you can look up articles probably on the internet on how to gradually stretch yourself so you can sit into the full lotus without pain. I'm pretty sure I there used to be like a yoga magazines that would have articles on this stuff and I'm almost positive you could find that sort of thing on the internet. What kind of stretches to do and so forth so that you can sit in full lotus posture without much pain. But I'm not even sure if

you're even referring to full lotus here. It could just be even the easy position where you got both feet kind of flat on the on the floor, one in front of the other, you know, one ankle in front of the other, that that might be hard for you also.

Um

sitting on a like a rolled-up towel, like a one of those big zafus, like they use in Zen, one of those big pillows, um that was always too much for me. But, you just take a regular towel and just roll it up so you've got something that's like this wide and maybe this big around, and you just prop it up

underneath like the back of your behind.

It helps to keep your back straight.

You know, that's that's like one of the most important things is to keep your back straight.

Um that's probably more important than sitting in a full lotus position.

Full lotus posture, the padmasana.

So,

yeah, I mean, I just kind of toughed it out, I guess. I just kept doing it, and it hurt. And it may be that I'm paying for a little bit now.

It's like I do have kind of wonky joints in my knees and my hips to some degree now, just from just forcing myself to sit in a full lotus.

Um I was so

unflexible, inflexible, in my lower body that I had this ambition when I was a young monk. I wanted to be able to sit in the full lotus for 4 hours straight and then sleep in that posture. I'd be doing the the sitting dutanga at the highest level.

And I I never got close. I think the longest I ever sat in the full lotus without just searing agony was maybe a little over 2 hours.

That was the best I could do.

But, with regard to this, yeah, I would I would advise you to look up some uh yoga articles or

um probably even they got YouTube videos on this kind of stuff. You know, how to stretch so that you can sit in the full lotus comfortably because the full lotus is the best meditative posture.

I'm not exactly sure why. I've got theories. One is it just helps you to sit straight upright more easily. And just being straight upright just naturally makes you more alert. You know, if you're in a sleepy posture, you're more likely to feel sleepy. If you're in an alert posture, which is like straight up and down, you're more likely to be alert, which again is one reason why meditating while lying down doesn't work

so good.

But also I think maybe like yogis they the yoga people might have theories of you know, it helps the the kundalini energy or something. I think also just having your your legs folded up like this might reduce blood flow to your legs, which would increase blood flow to the upper body including your brain thereby making you more alert or something.

But um

yeah, I just I just tough it and uh maybe that was not the the best approach to take. So, I would I would look up some yoga

uh stretches on how to sit in a good meditative posture more comfortably.

That would be my advice.

So, I'll just move on to the next question here. This is from Mary spelled m e r r y.

And Mary says, "Does your future wife listen to these Q&As and does she comment on some of these questions?"

Yeah, she she watches each Q&A.

And um

I mean, to some degree she's just trying to help the algorithm, I think.

And uh

yeah, I mean, usually she's listening.

Sometimes it might just be background noise while she's multitasking or

something. And she does ask a few of the questions. Not very many. She didn't ask any of this time. But uh yeah, she occasionally asks a question, too.

So, yeah.

That's the answer to that question is yeah.

And then Mary's next question is, "While I am at it, may I ask is your future wife a Theravada Buddhist? And not really.

Uh in in the West, it's really

I mean, most people in the West tend to be eclectic. Or especially if you're kind of moving away from a traditional Christian

like approach to spirituality.

Um

Yeah, she I mean, she she goes to different sources. She watches old Ram Dass videos. She likes Manly P. Hall, listens to his philosophical kind of stuff, watches Theosophists.

Um

So, yeah, she's she's uh interested in a lot of things. So, I mean, even I am not like 100% orthodox Theravada Buddhist. It's like my mind isn't narrow enough to just fit into that category.

You know, I've I've So, Mahayana I think

is good. Nagarjuna I like. Um

I mean, some Hinduism. I read the Dow De Ching sometimes.

So, yeah, even I am not like strictly speaking

like a really good Theravada Buddhist.

So, and and she's probably a little more on the away from orthodoxy than I am.

But uh she is interested.

So, I'll just move on to the next question. This is from Rui.

And Rui says, "Hello Panyo. Here is a somewhat childish question. Is Mara aware about talking or thinking about him, her, it?"

Well,

whether Mara even exists or not is
um I've expressed some doubt on this
issue on probably like 10 Q&As ago or 20
Q&As ago. Um I really don't think we
need a cosmic bad guy
to lure us into temptation.

I mean, I'm sure that there are some
freelance cosmic bad guys out there that
just like with people, but even
they can't do anything to you that it
isn't your karma to have happened.

And um Mara, just like the the position
of cosmic bad guy,
uh you know, it's sort of like, you
know, the devil in Christianity.

There are differences between Mara and
the Christian devil, but um

they do both have the uh
sort of like the the position of, you
know, being the tempter, the bad guy,
the person who's trying to
um keep people from reaching the
spiritual goal.

And Mara, I mean, he's not trying to
keep people out of heaven so much as
he's just trying to keep people from
getting enlightened and leaving the
whole system cuz in a way he's like lord
of samsara.

You know, there's one metaphor or or
simile,

no, I think it's a metaphor, of, you
know, like you got Maha Brahma in the

palm of Mara's hand. I don't remember where I read that, but it's it's in there somewhere, which is symbolic of, you know, even the highest heaven realms are all within Mara's realm of samsara. He's like the god of samsara. And if he can't get you to be bad, he'll get you to be good because going to heaven, you know, I mean, heaven is still in samsara. It's a more comfortable level of it than here or hell, but still, I mean, it's all part of the system.

And with regard to uh is he aware? I mean, assuming that Mara exists, probably he doesn't give a damn if we're talking about him or not. Maybe if he's

just have, you know, it's a slow news day, he's just, you know, kind of lounging up there in his his the heaven realm of the gods who delight in the creations of others, um you know, his his daughters aren't pestering him, you know, he might uh just take a glance down at the earth or, you know, if he's not trying to tempt some yogi into having lustful thoughts or something.

Maybe.

I don't know.

It's uh

It's hard to say exactly and the wind is blowing hard right now.

Let's see.

Yeah, it's

Yeah, I mean

I mean it might be like asking if Santa Claus is aware of whether we're good or bad when we're kids.

Um

Yeah.

Yeah, that that is It's It's not really a childish question, but it's it's kind of a difficult question because personally

uh I just don't think that there's I mean I'm sure that there are malevolent beings out there that are like above the human level even though they're bad. I mean they're more

powerful than us, you know, they might be in a different realm that can come into this realm and and mess with us sometimes.

Um

Maybe they just hate

certain certain types of beings or hate certain ideas and

I don't know. But uh

just to have like one person whose job

is to be Mara, that I mean it seems kind

of pushing it to me. It's more It's more

mythological, I think, than

than uh

this empirical.

And uh

I I'm whether they know that when we're thinking about them

Yeah, I mean Mara is sometimes in the plural even in Pali texts, so there's more than more than one of these kind of devils or whatever you want to call them, demons.

Um

Although Mara technically is a deva, he's a god.

Just he's sort of a

uh

Oh, never mind.

Yeah, it's it's really a tough question because

I mean first of all, I'm not even sure that Mara even exists. And so you if you

interpret that as just sort of powerful malevolent beings out there, are they aware of us talking or thinking about them?

I think probably most of them just don't give a damn what we think.

Unless they're trying to influence us in some way, and then they're already attending to us. But I don't think if they're not attending to us, I don't think they care or you know.

Yeah, that's that's sort of my best answer. It's sort of a semi-coherent answer, but um that's how it came out of my mouth.

And so finally

and really finally here, the last

question of this Q&A, also by Rui.

And this is kind of an interesting one.

Do you think AI is pure materiality or

rupa? It seems to deal with meaning with

a certain ease, even flair, but it is

just a non-sentient arrangement of

software and hardware. Well,

materialists can say the same thing

about a brain.

You know, it's like AI is in a computer

and human consciousness, according to

the materialists, is just in a brain.

So that's that's just

it's just an arrangement of software and

hardware.

Except the hardware is more wetware, you know, it's just this gooey gray meat up there with lots of nerves in it.

Um

so I mean if if

human consciousness at from a material level is just material

but

I mean it's just like a side effect of chemical reactions, electrochemical reactions in the gray blob of meat.

Um

I mean you could look at AI in a computer as similar.

And if computers ever become as complex as a human brain, I mean why couldn't

consciousness arise in a computer?

I mean already they can mimic

consciousness. They're they they have a
certain

um intelligence which um, could be just

very rudimentary consciousness because

my theory is that the entire universe is
conscious.

So, there's consciousness even in

even in a computer chip, even if the

computer chip is is empty. I mean,

there's been nothing nothing, uh,

downloaded into it or anything. You

know, a brick has this rudimentary,

extremely elemental kind of

consciousness to it.

I mean, in my opinion, at least it's

it's the working hypothesis that I'm working with.

So, I don't see any reason why consciousness would have to arise only in a brain.

I mean, what is what is it about a brain that has this monopoly on consciousness arising in it?

You'd think, I mean, to me it would seem it's just the complexity of it, but potentially, computers could become even more complex than brains. So, why wouldn't it, uh, like an extremely complex supercomputer have consciousness and then start becoming like self-aware?

Because I think, you know, even a
hydrogen atom has like this tiny
elemental

glimmer of consciousness anyway.

So,

yeah, that's that's my answer, I think.

I think I'm I'm sticking to it.

So, that was it. And, uh, I may have to

this this keep doing Q&A's, um,

at less than 2 weeks just to get down to

below

3 hours like last time.

I think I had another 3-hour one

like a couple months ago.

So, uh,

if you have any questions you think I

can answer, something about Buddhism,

Buddhist philosophy, Eastern philosophy
in general,

you know,

Burma, my own personal experiences as a
monk in Burma.

My own personal experiences lately, I'm
I'm pretty good I got a pretty good idea
of what my own personal experiences
were.

So, I can answer those kind of questions
fairly easily. This meditation that kind
of stuff. If you have any kind of
questions that you think I might be able
to answer, feel free to ask in the
comments below.

And uh subscribe, please, if you haven't

already.

And uh

look at my URL links in the comments
below or in the the description thingy
above the comments.

And be happy.

hello and welcome to episode 49 of
question and answer I am your host Ponyo
Bossa and this is my beverage
has a good book says man cannot live by
bread alone there must also be a
beverage
and uh we've got even though it's been
less than two weeks still we've got a
fair amount of questions here and before
I start answering them I would just like
to share with you a strange bit of
information I was looking at my YouTube
Analytics
and I got the strange information that
over the past year
95 of my viewers have been male no wait

97 of my viewers have been male and then if you go with just viewing time it gets even worse it's like viewing time is 99.5 percent

by males so it's of the viewing time of this video or of my videos in general over the past year only 0.5 of it has been watched by females

and I think they're almost entirely between the ages of 45 and 54.

so I don't know what the problem is with with American women or just women who watch YouTube in general I mean or all Western female Buddhists except for like three or four like communist Jewish lesbians or something I don't know it's not even funny really

I mean listen I should cry or something

you know I should I should be more

touchy feely and just cry about some

I don't know

intense personal

something

I'll have to work on it

anyway after I button my shirt pocket

here I'll start answering questions

and okay those button all right so the

first one is from Johannes and Johannes

says what does early Buddhism and you

yourself think of demons and exorcism is

it a common Buddhist belief that a demon

or Mara is the cause of unwholesome

mental States maybe always

well in Buddhism it's pretty much
it's pretty much subjective and it seems
to me that Mara is largely Superfluous
because he can't do anything to you that
is in conflict with your own Karma
anyway and your own karma is your own
mental state it's like the momentum of
your mental States especially your will
or your your volition
but nevertheless in early Buddhism there
is mention of demonic possession
um the only case I can think of that
just flat out describes demonic
possession I I assume there's more in
there but the only case that really
stands out in my memory is there's a an
obscure linear rule

saying that monks are not allowed to eat raw meat or drink raw blood unless they are possessed by a demonic entity

and I guess what happens is that demonic entities crave raw meat and raw or raw blood which is it's a common belief in Burma also um necromancers will attract Spirits by putting out raw meat or raw blood

and once they get their filled and I guess they're satisfied or something and and they let go and they go away there's also mention

um in the deganikaya of spirit mediums so I guess that's kind of like a possession by some kind of spirit but

they're not really like violently taking
over your body or anything

um exorcism the closest thing to
exorcism that I've experienced in
terrible Buddhism is just

calling in Monks to chant purita
especially the metasuto which is like
the the Panacea

of uh getting rid of of pesky Spirits or
you know invisible beings that sort of
thing

um

but with the guy it seems like the point
of the question here is that those
demonic possession really cause a lot of
um you know people Behaving Badly or
having bad mental States and you read

the New Testament the Bible it's like
everyone and his sister was possessed by
demons

um but in in Buddhism as I said
practically at the beginning of this
answer

um it's much more subjective you know
it's it's really a matter of your own
mental states which are your own
responsibility and demons and so forth
really can't mess with you unless it's
just your karma to be messed with
so I I see I see Mara as kind of
Superfluous I don't think he uh he's
really necessary in the grand scheme of
things

but um nevertheless I mean demonic possession is recognized in ancient polytexts and exorcism is mainly a case of not so much driving them out in the name of godama Buddha as just uh essentially beaming love at them and then usually I mean they're possessing someone because they're unhappy they have some sort of need and then you just satisfy the need and they go away Buddhism is kind of uncompromising and it's non-violence even towards demonic entities so I'll just move on to the next question by Johannes which is

when the Buddha explains non-self of the
condos he goes by this logic is the eye
changing or unchanging changing is what
is changing Suka or duka duka is what is
changing and duka Worth to be called
self no but this logic why is nirvana
not called a self

well Nirvana is completely off the scale
and a self presumably would be some sort
of entity that can be recognized or
perceived grasped somehow and nibana is
just completely off the scale

so

um I don't think anybody really
identifies with nibana

anyway

so I guess that would be kind of a
simple short answer to that I really
don't think anybody really identifies
with nirvana even though in the
upanishads they've got you've got
Brahman which is
more or less you're roughly equivalent
to Nirvana which is considered to be the
self but they've got a different
approach to looking at these things
first they they reify Brahman or
Ultimate Reality so that you can get
some sort of grasp on it and identify
with it but Buddhism early Buddhism
especially and some some schools of
Mahayana just refuse to reify the the
absolute or Ultimate Reality it's just

totally off the samsaric scale
and so you can't really identify with it
and even the the Hindus the vedantas who
are identifying their self of Brahman
it's not really Brahman that they're
identifying with it's just a concept in
their mind the concept Brahman and
that's the same way if you identify with
nibbana you're not identifying with
nibana you're identifying with the
concept of nibana

so

let me go just move on to the next
question also from Johannes
and he says goenka will say samadhi is
control over the mind

while ajan Brahm will say it's just
letting go also Christian contemplation
and prayer will have more likely the
notion of completely surrendering
yourself to God oh completely
surrendering yourself to God in your
opinion what is more likely to be right
concentration

and Johannes is European and he's got
strange quotation marks here in his
questions like the the first one is
upside down you know

so anyway

um samadhi is he somebody has control
over the mind will say just letting go
Christian contemplation

uh in your opinion what is more likely

to be right concentration well if you
look in the Mahaska

right concentration in Orthodox carobada
is defined as the four genres and like I
was saying in a recent video I do not
think that all four genos are
necessarily superhuman mental states
which they sort of evolved into being in
later Orthodox tradition

but right concentration is your mind is
focused on a wholesome object as a kind
of meditation

that would that would probably be like a
good orthodox

um definition of of concentration

just keeping your mind you know focused

on a wholesome dharmic object of
contemplation

um at least you get the fourth of genre
and then and then your mind is just
silent wide open like uh the the
Christian Mystics who uh you know they
call it high contemplation where your
mind is just empty but according to them
your mind isn't totally empty because
even though you eject everything you can
possibly eject there's still this
substratum of like the spirit of God
that resides there and um

I think I should just move on to the
next question

it's starting to Wade out into deep
Waters here and uh I could spend 15

minutes trying to backtrack and get out of the water so I'll just move on to the next question here and this is from Mary spelled m-e-r-r-y

and Mary says how can you explain that in fourth of genre you have super mindfulness and no feeling pain that you have in your body for example broken leg noticing pain is also mindfulness how does that work well one thing is if you're in Jonna and all of a sudden your leg gets broken you know somebody just runs over you while you're sitting there in meditation in their car uh they run over you in their car while you're sitting there in meditation

um you're probably knock you out of the genre

um I would I would assume maybe fourth genre where I mean you're just like mastering you know you're at the highest level of genre still I mean

I'm reminded of one time when I was a college student and I happened to take a certain psychoactive substance and I was walking around with shorts on this is like May or June and there were stinging nettles and I was walking through these stinging nettles and I could feel it on my bare legs but I didn't really identify it as pain it was just a kind of energy or sensation or something and it may be

and then somewhere at the very highest level of meditation if they experience some sort of damage to their body you know like the broken leg that Mary here's talking about it might still be experienced but just as a kind of neutral

you know energy or sensation so you'd still be mindful of whatever is coming up

um I really don't think that if you're in Jannah you just go completely numb or that you become unconscious like a hibernating squirrel or going to a kind of suspended animation or anything like that

so you're still very like you're more
awake than you would be normally but I
think it's the main point is that either
if all of a sudden your leg breaks it's
going to snap you out of the meditation
or you're going to experience it as a
kind of neutral

something

just a kind of energetic thing going on
and you'll be detached from it it won't
be you you won't identify with it

so we'll just move on to Mary's next
question here

I knew that in parimoka there is no rule
against eating Garlic and in bikuni
rules there is where is the rule for
monks to not eat garlic

well

it's in the the condicas in in the

Winnie pitica you've got two main groups

there's five books the the fifth book

um

what is it starts with a P

not piranha

the pariwara no not the pariwara either

it's it's five books the fifth book is

just it's very late it was apparently

composed in Sri Lanka it's one of the

latest additions to the topitica is just

review I think there's only one new rule

in the fifth book which is at least I

only noticed one new rule and that is

making the sound of a drum with your

mouth if you're a monk you know you're
you're doing the Boombox stuff with your
mouth that's against the rules
um but you've got the punimoka rules
or and you've got what is called the
kondikas the mahavaga and the Chula logo
and this rule against a monk eating raw
garlic unless he is sick is found in the
kondikas and I don't remember exactly
where it would either be there's like a
just a miscellaneous collection of rules
in the chulawaga and I think it's in the
mahavaga there's the chapter on medicine
so it could be in the chapter on
medicine and if it's not there then I'd
look in the the miscellaneous chapter in
the in the Chula laga but I'm pretty

sure it'd be in one of those two
there's lots of rules that are beyond
the party mocha rules there's 227 putty
mocha rolls but all together I would
guess I've estimated that there's like
between two and three thousand rules
like even the rules about shaving your
head is knocking the putty mocha or you
know the allowable colors for robes the
allowable materials for robes how to sew
it and all that that's not even in the
putty mocha there's lots of relatively
important rules that are not in the
putty Mountain which is kind of strange
but
that's just how it is and uh some of

them are just sort of like

um appendixes to certain rules like I

think it's the very first part of zika
rule

if I remember correctly there's uh just
this extra rule tacked onto that that's
not considered part of the padimoka that
makes it illegal or against the rules

for a monk to make a Hut out of mud and
then build a fire inside the hut to bake
the Hut so it doesn't melt in the rain

you know sort of like you're you're
cooking it like a big pot

and that is against the rules because
there's all kinds of tiny insects and so
forth that live in in wet mud

so I mean that was it's in the the putty

mocha section of the rules but it's not a putty mocha rule it's just this extra rule but if you read the con because it's just chock full of all these all kinds of rules rules about using the bathroom rules about just when you can and cannot bow to another Monk that sort of thing all sorts of rules so let's move on to Mary's next question please comment on ten Fetters was you able to extinguish any of them the easiest ones would be probably be attachment to rights and rituals and ill will I think that they are in reverse order for some reason ignorance which always come first here it is last and

self-view that apparently only our house
don't have here it comes first weird

well to tell you the truth

I was never really interested in

memorizing the lists you know the the

four of these and the Seven of those and

the 37 of the other

um it just it never it just intuitively

it just didn't gel with me I really

don't think that the Buddha himself was

teaching people just lists of things to

memorize

that I'm sure he kept it like intuitive

and relatively simple like like the

Attica Wagga is simple Simplicity itself

but

I refresh my memory by looking up the

ten Fetters

in this Buddhist dictionary and anyone
who is interested in poly philosophical
terms or just Buddhist terravonna

Buddhist philosophical terms this this

is a good book to have by nyana tiloka

and I'm pretty sure he wrote it in a

British concentration camp because he

was a German monk living in Ceylon it

was called a time which was a British

colony so he was thrown into a

concentration camp where he wrote this

it has been sort of redone because

um later editors especially I think it's

Nana ponica

changed some of his definitions just

because

um there had been like established

precedent with regard to certain

um certain words that were used as a

renderings like I think he changed

taints more like uh what is it the

awesome walls

um yanity loka called them bias call it

bias and then that got changed to change

or canker or something but anyway the

ten feathers here or the some yojinas

the 10 some yojinos here Fetters

there are ten feathers tying beings to

the wheel of existence namely one

personality belief or Sakai Aditi to

skeptical doubt or Ouija kicha and kind

of skeptical of the the definition of

uchikicha a skeptical doubt three
clinging to Mere rules and ritual or
Sila Bata parmasa and that one also is
like the standard Orthodox traditional
definition

which I think could use a little
qualification for sensuous craving or
kamaraga

five ill will or biapada six craving for
fine material existence or Rupa Raga
seven craving for immaterial existence
or arupa Raga eight conceit or Mana nine
restlessness or udacha and ten ignorance
or avija

and uh he continues here the first five
of these are called Lower Fetters

uh as they tie to the sensuous world the latter five are called higher Fetters as they tie to the higher worlds for example the uh or that is the fine material and immaterial world

he who is free from numbers one to three is a sodapana or stream winner that is one who has entered the stream to nibana as it were He Who besides these three Fetters has overcome four and five in their grocer form is called a sakadagami he wants returner to the sensuous world he who is fully freed from one through five is an onigami or non-returner to the sensuous world he who is freed from all ten Fetters is called an arahant the perfectly

a perfectly Holy One

according to this book

so yeah the reason why they seem to be

in Reverse orders because the first five

Fetters are the lower Fetters and then

and they're the the easiest to get rid

of and so you get rid of the easiest

ones first

but uh I really don't put a lot of I

don't put a lot of emphasis on this kind

of thing I mean just like the the list

of the ten Fetters or like the the

hindrances and you know it's it's really

not necessary when I was ordained there

was a a monk that was ordained the same

ceremony as me and he would just he he

was like the disciple of the scholar
Monk and I mean he would just be
memorizing lists I mean that was like
that and meditation were pretty much
what he was basing his his Monk's life
on

and uh I just could not relate toward it
all I mean the meditation part I could
relate to that was about our only
overlap in our practice

so I it's really not that important to
to memorize all the stuff it's good to
have it as like a reference you know to
so you can look it up and see what
people are talking about and if anything
really resonates with you then that's
good you know if it helps you to

practice helps you to be you know a good
and happy person that's fine but um yeah
I really do not think that these lists
and and also just the rules like you
know the the
that he has you know eliminated the
first three and let's see here I'll look
it back up again
the first three which are
personality belief that's in belief in
itself really
and skeptical doubt I would consider
that more like indecision
you know where you is sort of like a
conflict of two different ideas and
you're not fully behind either one

that kind of thing

and three clean come here rules and
rituals

and if you read the Attica Wagga you see
that this is largely an artifact of

later you know later developments that
syllabata paramasa really is is morality

itself it's not just rules and rituals I
mean just even morality itself

is included in this if you cling to it

if you think you're going to be

liberated or enlightened through

morality

or or according to the guaga through

immorality either through amorality I

mean it's just it's largely uh it's just

another

um samyogenized it's another fetter

so

there is that

so let's see here

um next question from Mary

and this is this is strange because it's

not a question at all but he says it's

for the Q a I mean he starts off for Q a

and then he says I think it would be

better that Buddhism wasn't true if I

have to live this life or any other life

over and over again I would literally

kill myself and that would be pointless

so I'm amazingly hope Buddhism is not

true well if Buddhism is true and you

kill yourself you just get reborn again

unless unless you somehow become
enlightened before you the moment of
death

so yeah I'm in this that's kind of what
Buddhism is trying to do is get off the
wheel but it reminds me of when I was a
young monk still living in America

before I went to Asia there was this
Jehovah Witness guy who would come to
convert me and and he'd visit like once
a week and I just kind of enjoyed

arguing or debating with him you know
sort of discussing with him and um

I just it seemed to me that the Jehovah
Witnesses I mean if they're right that
would be good for me it would be it
would be better for me if the Jehovah's

Witnesses were right and if Buddhism is right because Jehovah Witnesses don't believe in hell they think a good God isn't going to punish people with eternal torment that the bad people just get poofed out of existence the good people on the other hand aside from 144 000 that go up um and get administrative jobs in heaven the rest of everybody get Paradise on this Earth which consists of if you look at Jehovah's literature of essentially picking fruits and vegetables going on picnics and hugging wild animals you know you're out there hugging in the grizzly bear

and um yeah I think just being poofed out of existence would be preferable to that so let's maybe the Jehovah Witnesses are right and we'll just get poofed out of existence because we're not good Jehovah Witnesses then I'll just move on to Mary's next and last question which is kind of an easy one

do you like the acoustic part of to live is to die by Metallica And if I was a nicer guy I suppose I could have just listened to the song by Metallica before answering the questions but I have no idea what the song sounds like um I've never really been much into

Metallica

um

I'm not exactly sure when they reach their Peak but I I pretty much stopped listening to music like in the late 80s um up until just after I stopped being a monk or well no after I came back to America and there was internet and YouTube that I could listen to uh listen to music again but so do I like the acoustic part of Television Metallica I'd have to say no I don't like it because I don't even know what it what it is so I mean it was a nicer guy I'd listen to it first but I'm I'm not so let's

move on to the next question and this is
from ciovac and sipat zidina our good
friend CEO of action

and he says what do you think about
people who claim to have achieved these
arupa states

also I heard and he wrote a samapati
like suspended animation is also a thing
in some yogic traditions but I don't
know if they are the exact same

um I think he submitted this question
under a video I did that wasn't a q a
but it was about

um like the evolution of the the concept
of Jonna in early Buddhism and that
includes the arupa janas or just the the
formless realms

and I was saying that it's just an artifact that

um that the formless Realms may have been I have this there's a number of theories that you could use to explain it I mean is there's it's not just clear cut

you have to do like a detective work and there's hypotheses and theories

and one of my I think my favorite theory is that these formless states were

originally attempted descriptions of

Enlightenment or Nirvana that later on

just got out and loaded and became

obsolete or even heresy and so they were

well known they're they're actually in

like very old sutas and so they just got
uh like relegated to this state that's
not Nirvana but it's a very Advanced
state

so you can say well I attain this and
I'm enlightened therefore and then you
can have this this scholarly monk say no
no you may have attained that but that's
not Nirvana that's just this you know
the form of neither perception or
non-perception or the form of the the
realm of infinite Consciousness or
whatever

so

so what he's he's asking here is what do
you think about people who claim to have
achieved these arupa states well I'm

sure they've attained States alike that
um well some of them have
but um yeah it's going to be different
people I mean some people can just
deceive themselves or they're just not
very deep meditators and then they get
into a slightly more expansive State and
they think they've hit the the formless
realms

um but he's he's mentioning like uh
yogic traditions and they're very
Advanced yogis

um

that uh that get into all sorts of these
Advanced Realms or Advanced meditative
States

or contemplative States

and uh yeah I think they would fit

somewhere in the the four four genres

category you know maybe the highest

would be fourth genre and uh I mean if

you're interested in this sort of thing

you can just refer to the the recent

video I did on the evolution of Jonah

but um yeah I have I have read about

certain Hindu swamis

who can go into these states where they

apparently are like in a state of

suspended animation you know it's like

they're breathing in heartbeat almost

stopped they seem dead to the world but

when they come out of that state they

can repeat what everyone in the room was

saying

so I mean they were they looked

unconscious but really they weren't

unconscious

um so that wouldn't be nerota samopody

I'm not I mean neroda samapi is again I

mean you're just unconscious it's the

cessation of perception and feeling

and according to Orthodox tradition if

you don't have mental States you don't

have Consciousness either so I mean it's

just like a coma like a self-induced

temporary coma

and uh only extremely Advanced

meditators can do it I mean you've got

to be a saint to be able to get into

that stage and there's no mention of it really in the early early sutas unless they're referring to the cessation or the attainment of cessation neurotosomopathy as Enlightenment itself and again this could be a case of um

like an early description of Enlightenment just getting turned into like an advance but still not fully enlightened state

and I'm not sure if I answered that question at all but fortunately for CEO of action he asked a number of questions and so hopefully I'll competently and successfully answer at least one of them and his next question is

and I assume it to be because as I say
97 of all of my viewers are male
and anyway he says it seems the
conscious it seems the Consciousness
ceasing part is also described many
times in the parayana Vaga and the
Buddha was asked specifically by the
brahmana about the two popular
interpretations theravada Buddhists have
of Pardon Ibana even today
if they were to remain there okay so
that's uh that's his sort of
prologue I guess and then and then he's
quoting
he's quoting some uh some sutures here
or they're puchas in the paraina Wagga

there are questions there were these
young brahmanas who came to the Buddha
and asked him these philosophical
questions and then he answered them and
that's what the Perino laga consists of
mainly

so anyway

one of them says if they were to remain
there without traveling on even for
Myriad years old Seer and being freed or
to grow cool right there would the
consciousness of such a one pass away
and then the Buddha says as the flame
tossed by a gust of wind replied the
Buddha comes to an end Beyond Reckoning
so too a sage freed from mental
phenomena comes to an end to Beyond

Reckoning

and uh see one who has come to an end
did they not exist or do they exist in a
state of Eternal Wellness please Sage
answer me clearly for truly you

understand this matter

and then the Buddha says one who has
come to an end cannot be defined replied
to Buddha they have nothing by which one
might describe them when all things have
been eradicated eradicated to are all
ways of speech

and then and then see of action c pot Z
do not ask what are your thoughts on
this well um there's just one thing that
came up is it's very uh

it's kind of a famous statement here
that as a as a flame tossed by a gust of
wind comes to an end Beyond Reckoning so
too a sage freed from mental phenomena
comes to an end Beyond Reckoning

um

yeah I think

my translation is something as as a
flame tossed by the the force of wind

um

see it comes to a comes to its cessation
and does not subject itself to any any
designation so to a sage freed from and
it's namakaya is what is described here
as mental phenomenon namakaya is like
the massive names
the sage freed from the massive names

comes to comes to his cessation and no
longer subjects himself to any
designation

um and this the flame tossed by a gust
of wind and that's like the wind blowing
out and that's that's a Nirvana

literally Nirvana means blowing out even
though you've got other people saying it
means all these other things it's it's
pretty obviously literally Nirvana means
blowing out via d is to blow near means
out

so I mean it's it may have been
influenced by other words you know
English is kind of like that too
sometimes but um

let's see what are my thoughts on this
though uh really I mean it's it's fairly
straightforward even though it's hard to
grasp because I mean it's talking about
ungraspability you know once you've gone
off the scale no words will describe it
it's kind of what I was talking about
earlier with regard to the vedantists
who are you know giving a name to
Brahman and then referring to it as an
it and everything and the Buddhists I
mean you have to give Ultimate Reality
or the absolute you know the highest
state or whatever you have to give it
some kind of name
and otherwise I mean you just you might
just be oblivious

um you know it's it's sort of a catch-22
but whatever name you give to it that is
not it any Concept in your head that is
not it

so I mean it's in a way it's futile

let's see but I'm not exactly sure what
the question is here maybe I should back
up here because I really do want to
answer at least one of his questions

let's see the Consciousness ceasing part
is also described many times in the
prayer noaga and the Buddha was asked
specifically by the brahmana about the
two popular interpretations terravada
Buddhists have of party nibana even
today yeah party nibana is the Nirvana

after an enlightened being dies so they attain Nirvana while they're still alive usually or at the very moment of death and then pardon Iana is like after they die you know so which so there's there has been a certain amount of controversy especially in a very early Buddhism that are you fully enlightened even before you die or you're not fully you know attained to Nirvana until after you die and then all of the five condas disappear the breakup of the body and the mind and all that and the Buddha is just saying I mean you you don't even go there

yes I mean trying to pinpoint and understand intellectually this stuff it

just doesn't work

it's just it's just futile

so I guess those are my thoughts on this

so I'll just move on to CEO of action as

next question

among claims that quote it is the same

Consciousness that runs and wanders

through the count through the round of

rebirths not another

it is this same Consciousness that runs

and wanders through the round of rebirth

not another unquote

thus Buddha then replies quote silly man

who on earth have you ever known me to

teach in that way haven't I said in many

ways that Consciousness is dependently

originated since Consciousness does not
arise Without a Cause

but still you misrepresent me by your
wrong grasp harm yourself and make much
Bad Karma this will be for your lasting
harm and suffering unquote based on this
doesn't this go against the yoga Chara
view the only Consciousness exists

well I mean I'm not a an expert on yoga
Chara and Buddhism which is one of the
two main uh philosophical schools of of
Mahayana the two two main earliest ones
anyway

the Consciousness only School
and uh

I mean it doesn't necessarily go against
the yogachar of you the only

Consciousness exists because

Consciousness I mean it's it could still
be consciousness of something that's one
of the main things that is taught in
theravada is that

um you can't have Consciousness unless
it's consciousness of something
you know you have to have a mental state
with the Consciousness you have to have
a conscious mental state you can't have
the Consciousness all by itself you
can't have the mental state all by
itself you have to have Consciousness
and a mental state and

abhidham I really can't deal with it
very well in my opinion I think that the

Consciousness is just like the substance
the essence of the mental state the
mental state itself is just is the form
you know it's just waves or ripples with
Consciousness itself being the water
but um

let's see here

Buddha says haven't I said in many ways
that Consciousness is dependently
originated since Consciousness does not
arise Without a Cause well I mean there
are at least two sutos

um containing very old fragments of of
older sutas I think that didn't make it
into the tapitica that

um that described nibana or Nirvana as
infinite formless Consciousness but the

thing is anything that's infinite and
formless

becomes paradoxical I mean it's if it's
infinite and formless I mean it's it's
everything in zero at the same time I
mean there's you can't grasp it there's
nothing that can be perceived about it
because it has no form

so it becomes like paradoxical then and
I really do think that's a good way of
describing how Enlightenment works is
you know you got the Consciousness and
you're trying to just be at the level of
pure Consciousness the mental states are
irrelevant but I mean if you attain to
that a state of just pure Consciousness

then it becomes like this paradoxical
State and you just I mean you're not in
samsara anymore

so

it's really hard to explain Ultimate
Reality in words in fact it is utterly
impossible to explain Ultimate Reality
in words so the best thing you can do is
just talk in weird riddles like Zen

Masters or

or 1980 of of the the upanishads or like
in early Buddhism where you just kind of
dance around Nirvana as much as you can
and not reify it any more than you
absolutely have to

so I guess I'll just uh move on to CEO
of action and cod zidino's next question

I really do hope I answer at least one
of these to his satisfaction

um also why would you disagree with the
majama idea that neither the Mind nor
matter really exists since you say maybe
only Consciousness exists well I pretty
much answered that is that

um

if you call Consciousness Ultimate
Reality then

I mean it has to be consciousness of
something for it to have any meaningful
existence in samsara you get rid of that
of something and again it just becomes
indistinguishable from void it just
becomes emptiness itself

it's like uh I I've said this before
that I as a general rule I've got no use
for Hegel as a philosopher I mean he's
done more harm than good I think but um
the beginning of his Logic the beginning
of his his logical dialectic really is
profound and I like it very much he
starts off with pure being
and then the antithesis to Pure being is
pure non-being
and then he points out that pure being
and pure non-being are so utterly devoid
of any discreet content that they are
indistinguishable they just merge into
each other and they're identical
and and he uses that just as a kind of
um what is it not a postulate but what's

what's like a theorem or something just
throughout the rest of his his uh his
philosophy that everything and nothing
ultimately are the same which is really
elegant because it explains how the
universe arose but the thing is you've
got Pure being as the thesis pure
non-being as the antithesis then you've
got the synthesis which is like the
contrast

between being and non-being and from
this contrast

all the ten thousand things of samsara
arise like in the doubting it's like
from the Dao came the one from the one
came the two from the two came the ten

thousand things I think uh I think

that's a good quote I think I remembered

saying that

so uh

yeah so I think I've already answered

that

why would you disagree with the majama

idea that neither the Mind nor matter

really exists since you say maybe only

Consciousness exists yeah but once the

Consciousness becomes infinite and

formless then all bets are off you know

it becomes identical to emptiness it

just it becomes this paradox

so

let's move on to CEO of actions next

question can you explain the idea of

sampajanya and how it is related to

Sadiq yeah in the text there's a lot of

um a lot of talk about

and um city is mindfulness some pajanya

usually it's it's translated as

something like uh clear awareness or

full awareness like janya is knowledge

no gnosis

janya is knowledge pajanya is like well

I want to say prognosis I mean that's

what would be literally what it would be

in Greek for going back to with the same

uh Indo-European etymology and all but

um it's like an intensifier and some

pajanya is even more so you got two

intensifiers added to the the word that

means knowledge

and if you read the text like the the
Sadi patanasuta yeah horn is talking
about Sati sampajanya Sati is the the
four foundations of mindfulness which
does include mindfulness of the body but
the pajanya part when it's when it's
defining that or describing it it's
talking about you know when you turn
your head you know you're turning your
head you know when you stretch out your
arm you know you're stretching it out
when you retract your arm you know
you're retracting it it's like you're
just fully aware of whatever is going on
whereas with Sadiq it's more of a
focused deliberate thing whereas with

the sumpa janya it's just you're just
like wide open fully aware of whatever
is going on especially with regard to
like your own bodily processes and so
forth

but some pajanya usually is just
telescoped into City
so it's like an aspect of city or
there's

it may be that they're originally
different

but usually nowadays especially
um or even in in polytext when it's
talking about City it's like sampajanya
is is like included into that
but

um early terrible Buddhism was sort of pre-logical like formal logic hadn't arrived in India yet or hadn't developed in India yet there had there was no Indian Aristotle at the time and some of the classification schemes really do not make good logical sense and so you can have like a list where it has one General thing and then you've got a couple of specific you know aspects of that General thing on the same list which did never I've never really liked that aspect of of tarobada but you can't really blame them because they were products of their age and as I say India just had not

developed or imported formal logic yet
so I think I'll just move on to CEO of
ncpad zidane's next question
which is in the older sutas like the
parayana Wagga it seems the word used
more was Lord of death and referred to
Yama and that Enlightenment was referred
to as Escaping The Lord Of Death Or Yama
rather than escaping Mara however Mara
also literally means death do you think
Mara as an entity was a later addition
or had some different role in the
Buddhist time or is there some other
explanation for this
um yeah it is true in the oldest text it
does refer to the Lord of death

um

refers to the Lord of death I don't think it mentions Mara by name it may be that Mara was a later development I don't know what the origin of Mara is

um

so I don't know if there was like a a pre-bootest Vedic tradition that already had Mara that was just incorporated into Buddhist cosmology or whether

Mara was just invented as sort of the the Buddhist Cosmic bad guy sort of like Satan was invented by

um relatively later latent uh Hebrews

it's interesting if you read the Old Testament there's only three books that mention Satan at all

one of course is the Book of Job where
Satan is just kind of like a servant of
God he really can't go against God's
wishes

um and then there's just a few like
posts

um like Babylonian captivity like late
Minor Prophets that mention tomorrow or
I think it's in the book of Chronicles
there's a mention of Mara

part not but Satan so it could be
that Buddhism kind of developed Mara
relatively early on because obviously
he's in cortex of the sutus but he's not
as far as I know in the oldest strata
of of the polytexts

and so it could be that he's just a derivative of Yama although Yama is usually like in the in the upanishads um you almost sort of like a righteous you know he's a righteous judge of of the Dead

whereas uh maybe maybe it was that that Yama had too good of a reputation so they needed something more diabolical or you know some kind of tempter but uh again I the origin of Mara I I really don't know it is interesting that there is a asuta in the majikaya the mara tajanya suta in which Kali is mentioned as a relative of Mara but because I mean Kali didn't really become like a cosmic

deity with like a positive side until
early modern times like I think it was
in Bengal that because he started having
this Cosmic

um sort of a sort of like a good aspect
but uh Kali before that was just a kind
of demonest that haunted battlefields
and graveyards and so forth and uh it
may be that uh

that that Mara also just had some early
like in the Ganges Valley in the
Buddhist time was just some sort of
spook or demon or something that uh just
got incorporated into Buddhist cosmology
I'm not aware of Mara being mentioned in
any Hindu text that I can recall

so

yeah I think Mara might be a later

Edition or just sort of modification

just like like soccer Kingdom Gods is a

modification of Indra who was the patron

deity of the indoorsians

so man CEO of action I was asking some

tough ones I'm I do hope I'll answer at

least one of them satisfactorily and

here is CEO of action C pad zirena's

next and last question which is why do

you think the mahasanghika and stavira

Vada broke apart historically I have

read conflicting stories where the

Mahayana claim happened in the second

Council and the staviera wanted to add

new rules meanwhile the tarovada claims

the mahasagika wanted to remove rules
and that the actual split happened
decades after the second council with
the points of mahadeva denigrating the
status of an arahant and making the
Buddha into a god-like being yeah this
this is another one of those those cases
where the the evidence is not just
clear-cut that there is
um mention of the second Council not
only in terrible attacks but even uh the
other side like the mahasan gika schools
had their version of the second Council
and they agreed that it was mainly with
regard to
um veneer rules monastic discipline and

that the staviera side won the debate
that I'm pretty sure that even the other
side admits that the second Council it
was the stavier aside you know the
prototerras that actually won the debate
with regard to
um according to the the taravada version
it was a list of these things
um number one being is is it allowable
for monks to handle money because some
of the monks in the East had started
handling money and this the stricter
monks in the west weren't handling it
and they were calling out the monks that
were handling it which caused this this
kind of a an argument and uh so they had
this great Council to settle the issue

and there was a bunch of other things
too like is a monk allowed to carry salt
to to season his food and can he use a
sitting cloth that doesn't have a like a
border on it a border sewn onto it
and there's a bunch of other things
um you know should you uh follow the the
teachings of your your teacher
you know no matter what and the the
correct answer on that was well
sometimes if he's if he's saying correct
Dharma then you should follow what he
says and if he's not saying correct
Dharma you shouldn't follow what he says
I'm gonna go to the Salt one you're not
allowed to carry salt for seasoning food

although a monk is allowed to use keep
salt for as long as he wants for
medicinal purposes might mix it with
water to you know you've got like a cut
on your finger you want to you know what
is it trying to get a sliver to Fester
out or something I don't know
I used to know this guy who was a meat
cutter and uh I noticed that I'm all of
a sudden blurry
yeah still blurry hmm there we go
and uh yeah he'd uh if he cut himself
he'd have his fingers sticking in salt
water for a while but um I'm completely
going off the track here that but
they say
that the the Schism didn't happen right

at the second Council you know it wasn't like the the Maha Sangha side says no we're just gonna handle money from now on and screw you guys it was like you know it kind of worked with regard to the rules of monastic discipline then a few decades later maybe 20 or 30 years later then the split occurred the Schism the first major Schism in ancient Buddhism um and according to uh the Mahayana side or the mahasagika side it was over philosophical points like um one of the main ones was Canon araha backslide and become unenlightened whereas isn't our hot capable of having

nocturnal emissions in his sleep is he
is he able to ejaculate in a dream in
his sleep this kind of thing and um
with regard to uh making the Buddha into
a god-like being that may have been part
of it because it was the Maha Sangha
side that really uh took the ball and
ran with it with regard to
um devotionalism and just glorifying the
Buddha into essentially God
so yeah it's it's really uncertain
because there's not a whole lot of
um documented evidence and of course
archeology I mean it they can't do much
scientists can't work it out
so that's sort of the best I think the
best guess people can make is that there

was like a controversy over monastic discipline that caused the second Council that the Western monks like the Proto Terrell bottom schools they they won the debate the Maha Sangha schools admitted you know okay we'll stop handling money or whatever and then just maybe a few decades later possibly totally unrelated to the second Council you had

mahasangha philosophers who are coming up with these new ideas and saying you know that a Buddha or even maybe a bodhisatt but probably just a Buddha is like way above the level of an arhan the teras they they eventually kind of

agreed with it but they didn't go as far as the Maha Sangha did and so

um yeah I mean the

Mahayana schools obviously consider our
hunts to be just sort of a an inferior
kind of of enlightened being if they're
even considered to be fully enlightened
or not

so yeah it's it's really hard to say
exactly

um I'm sure there's all kinds of
scholarly stuff written on the subject
although most of it tends to be written
by academics who really don't have much
of a

much of an appreciation of of the finer
points of Dharma

but that's about the best guess I I
could make ever so I'll just uh move on
to this question this is from SS
and SS says have you read Ananda kumara
Swami's Hinduism and Buddhism would you
endorse his thesis that early Buddhism
was essentially non-different from
vedanta well I haven't read the book I
have read like articles by Ananda
kumaraswamy and I've read
um

a few books written by Hindus about
Buddhism and like comparing Buddhism to
Hinduism and one thing I've noticed is
that Hindus will always try to interpret
Buddhism along Hindu lines like even one

of the most important books I've ever read on the subject of Buddhism it's on the on the bookshelf back there studies in the origins of Buddhism by GC Pandey with the high cast brahmana and a Hindu um he was he would always interpret like the higher points of Buddhism along vedantis lines and if you're if you've been a Hindu your whole life especially if you're like a brahmana who is like just steeped in this you've been studying this stuff you're going to see everything through a Hindu lens and you look at Buddhism you're going to be seeing it through Hindu colored glasses um that's not to say that there's not a lot of similarity between Buddhism and

vedanta because vedanta and Mahayana

Buddhism official like

um majumaka vedanta and majama there was

a lot of back and forth between them and

I've read that uh shankara

who uh is one of the the main

philosophers in advaita vedanta that

I've read he was strongly influenced by

majama kabutism

so it might be the other way kind of

that Buddhism didn't really borrow or

wasn't imitating vedanta but to some

degree vedanta was imitating Buddhism

so

yeah I don't think early Buddhism was

essentially non-different from vedanta

especially because vedanta is still making assertions like philosophical metaphysical assertions even though they're they're kind of using a light touch whereas early Buddhism especially the earliest Buddhism like the Attica Wagga I mean it's like you don't make assertions because any assertion is going to be samsarik and it's not going to come anywhere close to touching reality

so it's just like a kind of mental discipline to cure yourself of beliefs essentially not because early Buddhism was skeptical but because it was profoundly mystical and they realized that you cannot understand Reality by

thinking about it you cannot understand
Ultimate Reality intellectually you
cannot philosophize your way to
Enlightenment unless you're doing it in
kind of a zen-like way or a majomoka
like way where you're using your
philosophy to just destroy all Concepts
and then when you've destroyed
everything around you then the the it
just turns on itself and destroys itself
and then you're all you've got is just
emptiness behind Emptiness is all that's
left

so I mean I do think that they're very
daunted like um like some of the
upanishads and like uh shankara were

trying to explain essentially the same reality that Buddhism is trying to not explain you know I mean I do think that there have been enlightened Hindus and so

you know their their experience and the experience of an enlightened Buddhist and maybe even the experience of an enlightened contemplative Christian it's essentially the same but you're just going to have different ways of explaining it and because vedanta and Buddhism both arose in the same general culture there's going to be more similarity in the explanation and uh the ultimate goal is the same it's just that

there's different ways of describing it
so I think I'll just move on to the next
question

ah

and this is from

ya j-a-h is that ja or ya

I don't know

anyway

Jah says is it possible that when one is
perfectly balanced still and wide awake
in the present moment for long enough
their meditation oh their mindfulness
can penetrate reality so deeply that
they sort of return back to a more
primordial state of pure Consciousness
or Oneness in which any semblance of a

body or separate self is temporarily gone and this could seem like a trance to some but it's actually proper samadhi and in this case then many people would could mistaken could mistake actual trances for Janna when they're actually not in proper samadhi or samasamati I think it's possible that one's mindfulness can penetrate reality so deeply that it actually enters into more subtle refined Realms or states in which physicality seems to dematerialize and these states truly can seem Transcendent of this realm are in and I think it's also possible and fairly common for one to enter a sort of self-induced hypnagogic Trance state where

mindfulness is not present and how those
nations are common and that should
definitely not be mistaken for Jana or
Sama samadhi but maybe it can be hard to
tell the difference sometimes for some
question mark just a thought

yeah I I pretty much agree with this
that

some people

um

they can just get into like this

transcendental state where they in a way
they kind of leave their body behind or
their body just becomes irrelevant you
know they're

um either they're just not focused on it

anymore

it just you know it's just in a way they
kind of leave it behind or it's just
it's just such a crude vibration
compared with the the fineness or the
subtlety of the vibration that they are
in that it just becomes like background
noise

it's still there I mean there's like the
energy of it and everything but it's
just that there there's so much more
aware of other things that their body
becomes way less important than it was
and then some people just hypnotize
themselves into a trance and if you're
in a hypnotic State I mean you can
experience just about anything

imaginable

you know any kind of perceptual State

you can you can induce that through

hypnosis

so let's see here was it what is the

actual question here

is it possible that when one is

perfectly balanced still and wide awake

in the present moment for long enough

their mindfulness can penetrate reality

so deeply that they sort of return back

to a more primordial state of pure

Consciousness Oneness which any

semblance of body separate self is

temporarily gone well I do not I'm not

I'm not a materialist so I don't think

that the physical plane the physical
body or the physical world is even
ultimately real so if you get into a uh
a state that's closer to Ultimate
Reality then I mean this stuff can just
start fading out it's like sort of like
um if you're in a dream and you start
waking up then the dream kind of starts
fading out it could it could be a state
like that also

so

yeah I pretty much agree with with ja or
yah here

um

let's see

and then there's one other question mark
here but maybe it can be hard to tell

the difference sometimes for some yeah a lot of people just get very confused partly because they don't have a teacher or partly because their teacher is just not very Advanced and doesn't know how to deal with some of the stuff that they're experiencing you know some some teachers especially in Asia they're just pretty much just they've just memorized from a book or what their teacher taught them and then just parroting it to somebody else and they can't really and they can't really deal with like strange problems in meditation because they don't have the experience to do it

well even worse than that is if you're
just on your own and you have these
experience if if I mean if you're wise
then you just let it go no matter what
it is don't attribute significance to it
just let it go let it go let it go even
Saint John on the cross it was a
Catholic Mystic would tell his you know
his students his his contemplation
students you know it doesn't matter what
it is you might hear the voice of God
you might see Jesus Christ standing in
front of you just let it go let it go
let it go
because
um you know even the devil can appear in
the form of an angel of Light or some

such so it just just let it all go and
don't attribute significance to it and
that is the wisest approach and it's
like armor it prevents you from being
led astray by weird meditative
experiences

so I'll just move on to the next
question here

and this is from crazy librarian
and crazy librarian says what

personality change did you notice from
before you were a monk as a monk and
after disrobing

uh that's kind of an interesting
question and it's

to some degree it could be like a trick

question because

um

I mean you could say you know what are the changes from before I was a monk as a monk and after disrobing but I mean it could just essentially mean what were my personality changes when I was young when I was like you know no longer so young and then now that I'm like an old guy with white hair

um

so it's hard to say you know what changes were caused by my being a monk and what changes were caused by me just gradually getting older

but um

before I was a monk

gosh

let's see what are the main differences

well I

I wasn't as introspective I mean I was
always kind of an introvert but I wasn't
as mindful didn't have as good of
concentration as as after I became a
monk and it was like practicing
mindfulness and concentration like
professionally so to speak

um

and I I got fairly chilled out I mean it
wasn't easy it doesn't come naturally
naturally to me you may recall one of
the 10 Fetters mentioned above is udacha
or mental agitation or just restlessness

and I've got a very restless mind
and um so it was it took really just
grueling effort to really get my mind
clear

as as a meditator I had to live in alone
in caves in forests and just go for it
full blast in order for that to really
work for me but it did work so I mean
there was that I've got a lot more
perspective you know I'm less um
I see the big picture A little better
now I'm not as identified with the the
meat puppet

um I mean that was something that
happened you know after I was a monk uh
became less afraid of death
um but the difference between yeah

before I was a monk and while I was a
monkey probably greater than the
difference while I was a monk to now
when I'm no longer a monk again
um

I think the main difference from when I
was a monk to now is largely like I keep
saying

that I have to dedicate a lot of time
and energy just to navigating samsara
just you know working for a living
working full-time to pay bills that kind
of a thing so I'm more uh I have to
engage more in samsara and spend a lot
more time just thinking about you know
getting the bills paid you know mowing

the lawn and so forth and not so much
about you know finer aspects of Dharma
um also after disrobing because I'm
working full-time I'm no longer a member
of the Leisure Class so I have less
energy it's like my Vitality feels less
even though it's probably not so
different it's just that when I wasn't
having to work for a living you know you
can just sit around all day and so it's
I'm not I wasn't in as good of shape I
suppose and my skin wasn't as good you
know for for various reasons just I
don't I won't I won't even go there but
um

uh now what was I gonna say

oh yeah it's like I just had this extra

energy because I didn't have to expend
it like working full-time
and just in navigating so I'm sorry
interacting with all these different
people in these different situations and
so forth uh I mean even a monk has to
interact with other people and you know
navigate some SAR to some degree but
it's it's detached and in more subtle
it's simpler
so I mean that's the main difference
from when I was among him now is uh
mainly I just have to dedicate so much
more time and energy just to navigating
samsara and you know getting the bills
paid and so forth

so I don't know how well I answered that question and there's probably important things that uh I'm just overlooking and not not thinking of right now

so I'll just move on to the next

question also by crazy librarian

which is this mogulana was killed

ruthlessly and killing an arahond was an un

anandarika Karma

anandarika Kama but mogulana also wasn't able to avoid being killed do his

Killers receive life in Avicii hell for killing him if so what could they do to

avoid killing mogulana as mogulana was

also fated to die ruthlessly from having and Antarctica karma in the past so an

Antarctica comma if I remember correctly
that's it's a kind of karma that just
guarantees you're going to go to hell
right after you die you know essentially
the ground is just going to open up and
and swallow you're gonna fall down into
the lowest pits of hell and uh killing
an enlightened being is one of those
acts that is a guarantee of hell
and um who is one of the Buddha's Two
Chief disciples he and sorry puta were
the Two Chief disciples
um he was murdered he was essentially
beaten to a pulp just literally he
according to the texts he did not have
an unbroken bone left in his body after

this group of non-budist philosophers or
I think it was just uh some Hitman hired
by some uh disgruntled non-woodist
philosophers you know the competition
and according to the story
um when they when they came after him
the first two times he was a master of
psychic powers of all the the Buddhist
great disciples he was the one who had
mastered psychic powers best
and so he could just like Fly Away
now he could just poof on he could just
disappear in one place and appeared you
know 100 yards away or 100 miles away or
whatever but um finally after the second
time he realized that he had the karma
to have this done and so he the third

time he just didn't run away and let
them kill him but that's uh that's on
them killing him is still on them I mean
I mean

you can't really say that you know if
you punch somebody in the nose it's
their karma to get punched in the nose
and therefore you're off the hook
because

and they're paying off their old Karma
but you're making new Karma and so
mogulana may have had the karma to get
killed but I mean if it wasn't these
guys it would be somebody else and so I
mean if these guys just didn't want to
do it they're a change of heart or

whatever then something else would have
come along to accomplish the same thing
so yeah I mean you can't really blame
the victim as a way of of justifying
screwing them over or hurting them or
whatever it is true you know if someone
is murdered it's their karma to get
murdered regardless of whether they're
in our aunt or not
but the person who kills them is making
brand new Karma by killing them I mean
that's his volitional act his volition
you know he's still got the hate he
still got the ill will he's still you
know making this effort to hurt and mess
up and kill another person so that's
that's on the person who's doing it

even if it's the karma of the person to
get killed I mean it applies not just to
mogulana but you know to just anybody
you know some teenage prostitute in a
back alley in New York City you know
it's it's the same essential thing it's
you know it might be her her karma to
get killed but still the murderer is
making some seriously Bad Karma by doing
it

so I'll just move on to Crazy Librarians
next question

which is

who also got hit a lot when he did Ohm's
Bowl almost round which is pretty
Justified given what he did to these

people including children who hit him
until he bleeds get a huge amount of bad
comms and got sent to hell for next life
I feel this is totally not fair even if
angulima is an arhan so I'm Googling for
those of you who are unfamiliar with uh
the name

he was a serial killer

um anguli means finger and mala means
necklace it's a like a Garland so he was
a serial killer who would

um

after he'd kill somebody he cut off a
finger and put it on this this Garland
of fingers he had this this Garland of
fingers around his neck and um

I think it was uh Richard Gomrich wrote

this book

um how Buddhism began the conditioned

Genesis of the early teachings or

something like that and he had this

entire chapter on was anguli Mala a

worshiper of Kali that he wasn't just

just some serial killer that he had some

sort of religious reason for doing this

um and the Buddha converted him to

Buddhism by through some psychic powers

like unguly mall is chasing after him

well at first he was going to murder his

own mother he was so far gone according

to the story the Buddha saw this

intervene you know he kind of went in

between and ghoulimal and his mother to

kind of distract him and then ghoulimala starts chasing after the Buddha and although unguly mall is running as fast as he can and the Buddha is just walking in a leisurely Pace he can't keep up with him he can't catch him and then he realizes you know this is weird this is this is like Supernatural or super normal or something and it sort of broke down

um this hardened shell around his mind around his heart and then the Buddha was able to teach him something which is um a method that neem curly Baba would do also he would do something Supernatural super normal you know he'd perform some miracle which would

completely blow the mind of the person
that he was talking to that would just
sort of like make them vulnerable and
and then he could just kind of reach in
and say the right thing that was exactly
what they needed to hear but they had to
have their mind blown first so that they
could become receptive

anyway that's not the question crazy

librarian is asking is the people that

hit him when he went for Armstrong

because he was like this notorious

serial killer and then he gets converted

to Buddhism and then

um he becomes a monk

I think if I remember correctly by the

permission of the king you know the king
said all right he's con he's you know
he's converted to Buddhism he's like a
peaceful monk now all right we'll spare
him you know we won't have him well I
haven't executed in nasty ways

um so then when unguli Mala would walk
for homes like monks are supposed to do
walking through the village with this
bowl some people would be like spitting
on him and hitting him and stuff

um

I would imagine that the kids that
weren't really ripe for hell wouldn't
hit him hard enough that he'd start
bleeding

yeah because that's another one of the

uh the things well actually yeah I mean
just making an aura hunt bleed isn't a
guarantee of hell

it's making a Buddha bleed that's
another one of the anandarika karmas
that if you if you do this you're
guaranteed of Hell making a Buddha bleed
uh or killing killing an ordinary or a
hunt and so I mean just that kind of
makes it kind of suspicious that it's
probably uh an artifact of of later
tradition

when the difference between a Buddha and
an ordinary enlightened being had been
you know widened
but um

yeah uh people that hated him and were hitting him and stuff they did get some bad karma for it but uh yeah if they weren't really bad people maybe he like killed their their uncle or something and they and they smacked him or or you know put gross rotten food in his bowl or something I mean they'd be getting bad karma for it but um I don't think they'd be going to the lowest pits of hell

we'll just move on to uh

crazy Librarians next question

which is

hell beings are often portrayed dealing heavy and inhuman punishment to people who are reborn in hell do they reap bad

karmas from this well this is kind of
interesting question because

I have been told by a German monk who
lived in southern Burma back when I
lived in central Burma that um

according to Orthodox tradition

the the demons in hell are just like
there's nobody there they're they're
like uh

they're almost like Holograms you know
they're they're they're like robots or
something they're they're like

um fake beings that are just created by
the force of the karma of the people in
hell and so they don't have any
volitions you know in a way that

ironically they're almost like
enlightened beings
because you know they're not making any
Karma they don't have any bad mental
States or good mental States either
there is just it's just sort of like
this projection created by the the karma
of the people in hell and I
unfortunately I've been told that uh the
celestial nymphs like the harems of
minor goddesses that the the gods have
in the lower Heaven Realms are similar
but
assuming that there are demons that
really are genuine conscious beings in
the lower Realms and I assume there
really are demonic beings in this

universe

that uh yeah they're making really bad karma yeah they're messing themselves up and just keeping themselves in hell you know if they just kind of wandered off and refused to torture people they might get out of hell easier but as it is they're down there for good jillions of years

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from a u v s t r

and AV Str says High regarding the arms rounds is there any rule that says you have to eat everything that is offered to you obviously like you said once you are full you can give the rest to

animals Etc but are you allowed to deliberately not eat something like in Cambodia where they eat fried spiders that is probably one of the few things I could never bring myself to even try um no you have to accept what people are offering except you know assuming that they're offering food in good faith you know if they're trying to put a dog turd or something in your bowl because they just don't like you you don't have to accept that or if they're trying to offer you something that just isn't allowable like money you don't have to accept that but if someone in good faith is offering food even if it's food that you hate

um yeah you have to accept it you're not allowed to make faces or anything you're not allowed to like

anything like that you know you just accept it respectfully but you're not required to eat it like um there are some monks who are vegetarian

and even though they get meat in their bowl some of them

that I mean they're not required to eat the meat

um you can just move it over to one side and just eat what you want to eat I mean I did that even at my strictest

um sometimes I mean you just take all the food and you just stir it together

into a glob and I did that as a regular practice up until

um the banana man came along and there was this guy

he'd offered me like eight bananas at once you know he just had this big arm load of bananas and he'd give me these bananas and bananas just don't mix good with other Foods some food mixes good together peanuts you can peanuts can mix in with anything it still tastes fine but stuff like oranges and bananas it doesn't mix very good and so I got to this point where I just mixed some of the bananas in

and just as a way of not being totally grossed out by this banana flavored food

every day

um

but yeah I mean the easy answer this is
no you're not required you're you're
required to accept it but you're not
required to eat it

so um

with regard to fried spiders and nobody
fortunately nobody gave me fried spiders
somebody give me fried cicadas a few
times which I just didn't eat
and um I've gotten other things bee
larvae I've eaten fried bee larvae some
kind of water bug
all the dwingo in Burma I got I ate lots
of those

lizard Tails frog eggs

all kinds of things but you're not

required to eat it

it is kind of a good practice just to

eat whatever you're given in fact like

the

um not just me when I was a young mom

but I think the followers of ajan

mahabua just stir everything together

into this just glop and then just eat it

that way just without discrimination

they just eat it

because you're not supposed to eat it

for pleasure you're not supposed to eat

it to have a good time

you're just supposed to eat it so that

it will uh keep you healthy enough to

continue practicing

so the next question is from Stevie

I'm looking at the time where

an hour and 22 minutes now

Stevie says

I have Crohn's disease which requires me

to take daily medication does having

this condition and needing daily

medication prevent me from ordaining

based on my research I don't think I'd

be allowed to ordain because I'd be a

burden on others can you provide any

guidance on this well maybe I should

have looked it up before I did this

video but I'm not exactly sure what

Crohn's disease is I mean if it's a if

it's a disease I don't think it's a
disease of like skin eruptions like
there are certain diseases where you're
not supposed to be ordained but like
like epilepsy or or
uh leprosy

um there's a there's a few of them like
that where if you have the disease
you're not supposed to be ordained
because according to the story people
with these diseases were being ordained
as monks and just so they could get
cured by the Buddha's like super good
doctor jeevaka jiviko is the Buddha's
personal physician he was the the
personal physician to the early Sangha
when there weren't you know lots and

lots of them and so

um people started being ordained with

these diseases like leprosy in order to

get cured by jivacum so it became

against the rules but it's even though

it's against the rules to ordain

somebody with one of these diseases even

the ones on the list that are specified

the ordination is still valid

the monks who did the ordination get a

minor offense they got to confess it but

still the the ordination is is

considered valid

um

so I mean you could technically be

ordained

or Stevie could hear

um I know of I've read about one monk in
the ajan Shah tradition a relatively
senior monk who had to leave Asia
because he had Crohn's disease
that he had to live in the west where
disease our the word medicine was more
available and so forth

um

so yeah I mean technically you could
although

you'd have to make arrangements I think
that somebody would be willing to offer
you the medicine that you require I
don't know how often or expensive this
this medicine is for Crohn's disease
um I'm not even sure what Crohn's

disease is but technically I think you could be allowed to to be ordained you know it would depend on the Sangha if they didn't want to you know if it's a poor Monastery and they don't want to be you know burdened with the expense or something they might not be willing to ordain you I don't think you'd want to be ordained in some remote area of upper Burma or something

but um you know if there's somebody who's like willing to sponsor you and support you with the whatever medicine you need and they can afford it and it's no problem for them and they're happy to do it because they want to gather up

Treasures in Heaven and so forth then I think you can still do it

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from Francois or as

people with this name are known in

America Francois

and Francois says would you consider

being a biku again if your present

circumstances change drastically of

course or is it out of the question

thanks

um yeah I'm not going to be a monk again

um I got as far as I could with it and

uh I think if I became a monk again it

would be sort of cheating partly just

because

um you know I'd be getting old and

um you know just sort of be using the
the Sangha as a kind of retirement home
or something

I mean that's that's a common practice
in Southeast Asia but um

yeah I I don't think so

I do not think so so I think all that
was kind of an easy one as an easy
question anyway

so the next question is from
a skeptic

which I think means the vegan skeptic in
German

and the vegan skeptic says have you ever
studied the life of mahavira what are
the similarities and differences between

Buddhism and Jainism

um I read some Jain sutras a long time ago

um I think they're the ones that were in Max Muller's sacred books of the East series

and one of the sutras in that was

essentially just the story of mahavira

um and it was almost exactly the same as

the story of godama Buddha and I did a

video uh a q a relatively recently where

I was trying to explain how it is that

the the pronunciation of story of

mahavira and the renunciation story of

gaumabura were so similar and I do

think that um the the Jain's because

they lost their sutras twice you know

they lost their their body of of
literature twice because it was the
tradition in India to memorize it and
The Janes were just hardcore ascetics
you know they were they were busy
torturing themselves out in the jungle
somewhere and the ones that memorized
the texts just kind of died out and so
they had to have like two more or less
emergency councils to to sort of come up
with you know Salvage as much as they
could

of like a corpus of Jane texts
um so the the life of mahavira as it's
recorded in the Jain scriptures is not
necessarily reliable because I think a

lot of it was just borrowed

or plagiarized from the story of the

Buddha

so

yeah uh I mean he was definitely much

more of an ascetic than the Buddha was I

mean at least after his Enlightenment

supposedly he remained a hardcore

aesthetic korres the Buddha experimented

with hardcore asceticism you know just

as as much as as mahavira just traveling

wandering around naked and and just

eating cow poop or or just eating once a

week kind of this this kind of just I

mean he was just like emaciated like

this scarecrow or something and in the

Buddhist case he realized finally that

this ancient Indian tradition of just
torturing yourself almost to death
wasn't working it wasn't getting him
enlightened
until then he found the middle path
between self-torture and self-indulgence
whereas mahavira pretty much just stayed
on the the self-torture side and um
that's that's what Jainism really
teaches is that
um you do have a soul in in James it's
called the Jiva which in Buddhism you
don't have a soul or a Jiva
um but in Jainism you do and your karma
is almost a material substance that
sticks to your soul and weighs you down

so that you can't so that your soul just
can't float up into heaven and live an
eternal Bliss

and I do think that

um this belief goes all the way back to
the prehistoric Indus Valley

Civilization because there are a number
of different schools that were in the
shramana lineage or Shermana tradition
that predated The Vedic indooorians
coming into India

and uh so they believe that you have
that's what the whole philosophy of
Jainism or the whole practice of Jainism
is about is you do not want to make any
new Karma

and you've got to get rid of all your

old Karma and so I mean and this karma
is I mean you can do it without
intention unlike Buddhism or karma is
intention in in Jainism even if you step
on a bug accidentally you're making bad
karma for it
or you know even if you do something
completely unintentionally you can still
be making Bad Karma so they just are
radical like
radically passive you know they got like
the soft
grass broom and they sweep the ground in
front of them so they won't accidentally
step on bugs and
um there's this weird Sutra that I still

remember that it was back when I was
reading these Jane sutros when I was in
college

um it's like if if a Jane monk wants to
cross a river and there's no Bridge
um he can go in a boat but only if the
boat was going to cross the river anyway
if they cross the river just for him
just to take him across as a favor
they're making he's making Karma
so he's got to just go along for the
ride if it was already going there
anyway and then if the boat starts to
sink halfway across the river he's not
allowed to help bail it out because
that's making Karma so what's what
happens what are you supposed to do

according to this Jane Sutra is if he's going across the river the boat starts to sink he's supposed to take off all his clothes if he's got any because a lot of them just went around naked and fold them and put them onto his head so that if the the boat owner gets angry at him and throws him overboard his his clothes won't get wet and uh

also I'm pretty sure

it was the ojibacas did this I think the James did it also once you figured you'd gotten rid of all of your karma you're supposed to just wander off into this desolate area this uninhabited area and

just squat down and just stay squatting
there until you died probably of kidney
failure

so there are some considerable
differences between Buddhism and Jainism
one kind of minor one is that a turtle
or an enlightened like the the jainest
equivalent of a Buddha

um he's completely omniscient he
supposedly knows all things at all times
you know he's got infinite knowledge in
his mind all the time whereas in

Buddhism the Buddha was had a kind of
qualified omniscience where he could
know anything he wanted to know but you
know he had to attend to it in order for
the knowledge to come up so to speak

so Buddhism and Jainism have Roots going
back into the shromana tradition of like
ancient Northwestern India ancient
Northern India

um but the Buddha was more Innovative
and mahavira I think he went with a more
traditional approach

um with within the context of the the
shermanic tradition
and the genes were really

um

just radical Aesthetics whereas

um you know they they kind of look down
their noses at uh at the Buddhist as a
kind of shaven-headed householders you
know Buddhists get to wear shoes you

know they get to they use walking sticks
so they just sneered at them
so we'll just move on to the next
question here

this is from ludovus balam this is a
difficult one

and ludovus balam says would it be fair
to say that Logics are provisional to
Enlightenment such that a discernment
could be made but not necessarily
posited

which comes first the Sutra or the
philosophical underpinnings

and I really didn't understand this
um his reading levels way above mine
apparently so I asked him if he could
clarify

and then he says

is saying Nirvana needs to be discerned

ignoring the reality of it being

and extinguishing like saying XYZ was

provisional for me to become enlightened

but the Egg of samsara was what was

brightened not the baby chick of

Enlightenment being refined as a working

model

is there a sense in which the working

model egg or chicken isn't a Guiding

Light in this context I imagine it's

like a project Buddha being asked to

learn what what samsara and Nirvana are

the egg May well be the chicken but only

after it's hatched and lost the shell

sort of deal so tracing it back and
saying chicken equals egg or chicken
equals slash equals egg or relations
between the two as two would be mapping
them onto one another when they need to
communicate the territory so it's
learned and not referenced and yeah his
his writing level is way above my
reading level apparently because I mean
this is like trying to read Hegel
which I did I read pagel's phenomenology
in spirit I was forcing myself to read
at least four pages a day of it
I have to read it out loud just to keep
my mind from wandering away because it
was just so dense and abstract
what's uh man this is this it's

difficult even to understand this
question would it be fair to say that
Logics are provisional to Enlightenment
such that a discernment could be made
but not necessarily posited which comes
first the Sutra or the philosophical
underpinnings I mean I just have to
guess at even when he clarified the
clarification didn't really make it any
clearer to me

so

um

I mean the philosophical underpinnings
are just kind of Superfluous I mean it's
like a map
that helps you to get where you're going

but I mean it's it's completely just
radically different from the goal or
even the path

so

gosh yeah can any of you guys answer
this question

man

would it be fair to say that Logics are
provisional to Enlightenment such that a
discernment could be made but not

necessarily posited you know I mean

yeah I think that's how it's supposed to

work the Attica Wagga is is saying that

you're not supposed to discern anything

really because once you discern

something you know you're perceiving

something you're attributing

significance to it and you're ignoring everything else

so

yeah I mean it's you just follow the philosophy to the extent that it helps you to practice and maybe helps you to weed out certain bad ideas and so forth but I mean you're going for a kind of uh like quietism or just radical mysticism it's it's not really philosophical

other than maybe in the the majomoka sense of using philosophy to just destroy philosophy like there's a Mayana text I can't remember exactly which one it is it's the purpose of Lord Buddha's

teaching is to liberate us from our

Thinking by means of our thinking

so

yeah instead of just kind of thrashing

about in this this question here not

really being sure if I'm answering it or

not I think I'll just move on to ludibus

balaam's next question

and this one is refreshingly easy will

you be hosting any broadcasted Zoom

calls in the future for members of the

Discord group like you did that one time

um yeah it's not zoom it's um the

Discord server

has its own uh video video chat room

and uh I actually we had sort of like a

mini one just for moderators

um just a few days ago

and uh yeah it's easily done maybe we

can do it like next Sunday

which would be probably

mid to late afternoon like maybe

five-ish or six ish

going with American Eastern Time

um

yeah that's that's definitely doable I

mean it is kind of nice talking with you

guys

like in real life not just talking to a

camera with you guys hearing it later

so I'll just move on to ludibus balaam's

next question

was there a historical precedence of the

CD of seeing Karma during the life of the Buddha could the Buddha being able to see Karma allow him to convert a depth of his time or is it more realistic that he just had greater Authority in discourse by virtue of straightforward and penetrating rhetoric um following follow-up is there any historical trace or hiccups or idiosyncrasies of the Buddha that would give him a human face well that's let's just call that two different questions I just separated the two the follow-up will be uh addressed directly here so the first question here was there a historical precedence of the

city or power of seeing Karma during the
life of the Buddha could the Buddha
being able to see Karma allow him to
convert the depths of his time or is it
more realistic that he just had a
greater Authority in discourse by virtue
of straightforward and penetrating
rhetoric well I think there's both that
he was a philosophical genius I think
but

um it does say in the text there's There
Are Rules there's a winning rule that
says a monk is not supposed to do any
kind of Miracles or like
um like psychic Feats in front of lay
people

he can do it in front of other monks
maybe but he's not supposed to be doing
that kind of stuff in front of lay
people but the only psychic feat that he
is allowed to do in the presence of lay
people is to look into their minds to
see how best to teach them so I guess
that's what the Buddha would do and
certainly like in modern times neem
karoli Baba would do that where he would
just look right through you I mean he
could he wouldn't he would just meet you
for the first time and know you better
than you know you I mean he would just
see right through he'd see your past
lives you'd see your karma he'd just see
it all you know he'd be working on a

different level

so I assume the Buddha would be similar
to that

um so yeah I assume he was he was better
than most teachers at uh producing
enlightened disciples

which uh made him a more successful
teacher than Jesus of Nazareth because
I'm not sure of any of Jesus of
nazareth's disciples became extremely
Advanced maybe his brother James

but I digress

so I think I answered that question
actually

so I'll just move on to the follow-up
here is there any historical trace of

hiccups or idiosyncrasies of the Buddha
that would give him a human face well
um

it's it's kind of hard because we're
looking through

2500 years of like devotionalistic
glorification of the Buddha where you
know he is portrayed as just the perfect
ideal Indian saint

um but still you can pick up a few
little things it doesn't mention him
with hiccups I'm pretty sure

um maybe he did have hiccups there was
he had some kind of problems where
jivika his physician was giving him like
aromatherapies having smelling flowers
and so forth he did have things go wrong

with him like when he right before he
died he had uh

um like really like dysentery like
bloody diarrhea just really intense
abdominal pains and so forth presumably
after eating some spoiled pork

um he didn't like noise you know he
would scold people like there was a
little bit of a scolding

um quoted above in a previous question
where the Buddha was calling some Monk a
silly person probably uh uh what is it
Moga purisa or just an empty person

um yeah he would he would make fun of
people sometimes if he was scolding them
but it was generally monks you know his

disciples he wouldn't just be like
chewing out lay people that sort of
thing

um he had sort of a very dry sense of
humor you can find some humor in the
text cell though you know he's not like
yucking it up he never laughs or cries
although he does smile faintly from time
to time

um

let's see

gosh

yeah I mean it's really hard to find the
the original Buddha

um through the through the text

it's I mean it'd be almost as difficult
as knowing what the original Hercules or

the original Achilles was like just from
Reading

um you know the Ancient Ancient Greek
poems

so

yeah I mean he is portrayed as just the
the ideal perfect Indian Sage and so he
doesn't really have any

um vices or even like weird habits
anything like that

but he didn't like noise that's true I
mean he was he get on the case of monks
if they were being too noisy sometimes
but uh yeah it's it's hard to say I
think I better just move on to the next
question this is from Air rain

and Irene says

years ago a friend of mine wanted to learn how to meditate an acquaintance who supposedly knew how non-budists sat her down in her apartment one day and showed her it was her first time she ended up pretty freaked out because as she sat and meditated she suddenly found herself experiencing being outside the apartment building where we lived downtown yet the streets were empty and devoid of life or cars what was happening here

um it could be that she went into a kind of hypnotic trance

um it may not have been a

like a genuine Out of Body Experience if

she's not seeing what was actually there
that you know she was floating around
outside the apartment building but like
the the streets were completely empty
and with no life or cars so I would
assume that she went into a kind of
hypnotic trance State and was imagining
it

that would be my guess
and so probably the meditation technique
was not the best

um probably just some sort of Auto
hypnosis thing that was being taught
rather than like genuine mindfulness
where you know anything like that
happens you don't identify with it you

don't attribute significance to it you just note it and Let It Go not it and Let It Go not it let it go either that or just concentrating on you know your breath going in and out or something like that those would be more safe more Buddhist kind of meditations but I'm not exactly sure what the meditation technique was here so I can't really say for sure so we'll just move on to Erin's next question

I see a few monks online always working on social media setting up online fundraisers fundraisers and asking for people to send them cash for various reasons how does this conform to the

vinya and isn't the local community
supposed to support monks monks
pandering for cash on social media seems
like a dangerous slope To Tread down
what could possibly go wrong there right
what is the proper way for Lay people
interacting with monks asking for cash
also what about donating to a monastery
versus
an individual monk yeah there are monks
including some supposedly strict ones
who are
fundraising or asking for donations or
maybe they're trying to go around the
the winning rule against asking for
money by just saying well the monastery

could really use money you know we need the money to you know get this website going good or make repairs on the monastery or something but even hinting like that technically is against the rules

um I mean a monk is allowed to say well we need to upgrade the uh upgrade on your website or we need to fix the monastery but if you start hinting like you want money for it and then you're already uh you've crossed the line even though it's really difficult for a monk living in the west especially not to have anything at all to do with money because strictly speaking a monk should not have anything

at all to do with money

like when I was a uh even when I was an
Abbot at a monastery in Burma we needed
a bag of concrete I couldn't say you
know buy me a bag of concrete I could
say I need a bag of concrete I could say
could you get me a bag of concrete but I
couldn't say could you buy me a bag of
concrete because you can't tell other
people what to do with their money other
than just say do what makes you happy
so

um yeah it is it is kind of fudging on
the rules

um Bonte Guna ratna who's one of the
most famous monks in America he was like

the head cashier for the wehara book
service for for years and years
and most most Asian monks especially
just they just handle money and just
don't care

with regard to Western monks I'd guess
about half of Western Monk's handle
money but even the ones who are trying
to be strict like in the ajan cha
tradition

um they just don't know the rules well
enough or else it's just such a colossal
inconvenience not even telling people
what to do with money or or like
endorsing checks or something that they
just go ahead and do it
and they just try to do it as little as

possible and there were I had a teacher who was like that I mean he didn't handle money himself but still he'd be telling the monastery attendant you know go buy this and go get that which uh you know still breaking the rule but at least he wasn't handling it himself which is kind of a step in the right direction anyhow

so let's see what is the proper way for people interacting with monks asking for cash well I mean you're just helping them break rules

so I mean if you're okay with helping them break rules then

yeah and you can give them money

um but if they are asking for cash it's kind of futile to say well do you have an attendant that I could discuss the money with because if he's asking for the cash he's just gonna ask the the attendant to give him the money

I went to a Time Monastery in Washington state near Seattle and the first time I went there the Abbott was at the bank so I mean it's just really common see what is the proper way for Lay people interacting with monks asking for cash the prop the really proper way is just tell them you really shouldn't be asking for cash bonding I'm not going to give any I mean if if you uh I mean if you are following the rules I'd donate

to the the attendant or something
but if you're just flat out asking for
money I mean I'll I'd rather donate the
money to a monk who's actually trying to
follow veneer correctly

I mean you could say that I mean you'd
be kind of a it'd be kind of an
asshole-ish thing to say maybe but
um I mean that would be the proper way
of doing it or just don't say anything
just leave

I don't know

let's see also what about donating to a
monastery versus an individual monk yeah
well that's you can donate money to a
monastery and if they've got like a

board of directors or like an attendant
who lives there and the monks are strict
yeah that would be the way to do it
in fact you could uh just ask them what
they need and go out and buy it yourself
but um as I already mentioned though if
um if the the attendant there is just
handing the money over to the monks
anyway then I mean you're not really
it's not really an improvement
he's just kind of a money laundering
operation

so

yeah I mean the rules against terravonna
Buddhist monastics handling money are
very strict
and it's really a problem for Western

monks I've read three articles written
by Western monk strict Western monks
um regarding the money rules and all
three of them were basically saying you
know how much can you handle actually
handle money without breaking the rule
one of them was on John ROM although
that's neither here nor there the other
another one was ajanta nisaro another
one is an Australian monk who is no
longer in rubs

so I think I'll just move on to the next
question here from Aaron

can you explain the specific reasons why
mgtow

feminism sexual and racial identity

ideologies are blatantly non-buddhist
and then there's an addendum or explain
why they are Buddhist as the woke
American neo-budists claim well mgtow
yeah that's there's nothing wrong with
mgte1 there's different kinds of mgte1
now some mgtow is just you just go out
and pick up on women and have no
commitment but that's
in a way that's that's a very inferior
mgtow that is uh blatantly against the
Buddhist precepts which is a guy being
celibate or living alone you know not
having sex not not having a a female
significant other
um or a male one
um yeah that's I mean that's just basic

Buddhism right there feminism it all depends on what kind of feminism is it I mean if it's feminism like a feminist who really wants to help women and to uplift you know the situation of women and you know just going for just general equality that's one thing but feminine is like the man-hating variety especially now like the neo-marxist intersectional variety third wave fourth wave whatever wave we're up to yeah I mean that's that is uh if it's based on resentment and just hostility and and hatred or whatever then yeah it's not going to be good no matter what you're

doing because really it's the mental
states that determine the the moral
quality of an action

um sexual and racial identity yes sexual
identity I mean identifying with your
sexuality I mean

yeah I mean that's just kind of
ridiculous really it's a racial identity
ideologies I mean in Buddhism
it's like you're not supposed to
identify really as anything if you
possibly can help it

um and with regard to uh the Sangha
being ordained it's there's a number of
statements in the text referring to the
the song goes like the ocean all the
different Rivers you know these

different rivers with different
qualities just flow into the same ocean
and just become the same ocean and
that's the way the Sangha was supposed
to be you're supposed to leave your your
ethnicity your your social class all
that stuff behind you and then you just
become the son of the Buddha you're a
monk or a nun
and so this emphasis on racial and
sexual identity in modern Western
Buddhism is essentially just almost the
opposite of of what Buddhism is supposed
to be or was intended to be
so yeah it is blatantly non-Buddhist a
lot of it it's the cultural Marxism

stuff that is becoming this really
dominant in Western Buddhism
is uh yeah it's it's it's almost the
exact opposite of Dharma in certain
respects you know just the whole
grievance
grievance politics
you know or
um just the whole like blaming the
system for for your plight in life I
mean it may make perfect sense from a
political like uh spiritually bankrupt
materialistic point of view but from the
Buddhist point of view there is karma
and so if you are born you know in a in
a female body that's that's your karma
you're born in the male body that's your

karma you're born in a black body a
white body I mean that's you put
yourself there

so

yeah I mean the the all the all the uh
the identity politics stuff that has
pretty much taken over western western
Buddhism especially in Academia you read
academic Buddhist papers

it's it's like clown world really a lot
of it is just total clown world

so

yeah

I think I answered that one

so I think I'll move on to Erin's next
question

and that is is it possible for a child
or baby to become enlightened what about
being born as an aura hunt or
enlightened I'm thinking of examples of
some very young and very small children
through history and modern times who
seem to be extremely grounded and
unusually full of profound wisdom that
takes most people a lifetime to learn
into old age I suppose new age people
would call them old souls well just by
random coincidence I happen to read a JD
Salinger story just the other night
called Teddy about this boy about nine
years old who is enlightened
um the thing was that uh in the story he
was like some sort of Indian holy man or

a yogi in his previous life and then he dropped out and uh got married or something and he said that he was going to have to be reborn again anyway that he wasn't fully enlightened in his previous life

even if he had stayed a yogi he still wouldn't have gotten enlightened but because he sort of took this turn to the left

um he was reborn to this in this dysfunctional family in New York City instead of being reborn in the Holy Land of India and uh

but I'm digressing because that's just a

fictional story but it reminded me of
that because I just read it just a few
nights ago

um

there are stories in the texts of boys
who are being ordained as novices around
the age of nine who at the first touch
of the razor to their head as they're
getting their head shaved they become
enlightened

so there are enlightened children in the
texts

um

so

yeah it obviously happens regard to
being born enlightened

um I'm not sure how that would work

because if you're already enlightened
before you were born then you wouldn't
get born again according to orthodox
teravana

um there I think it's some Hindus maybe
some Mahayana Buddhists do think that
after you become enlightened just
because it's the right thing to do or
whatever you just keep taking Life After
Life like neem curly Baba was supposed
to be like that

um you know even after he became
enlightened supposedly so The Story Goes
you know he just kept being reborn and
or sort of uh you know out of compassion
or because it really didn't matter

because he wasn't really identified with the body or anything anymore anyway

um so being born in Aura hunt that's I according to terrible Buddhism I don't think it would it would happen unless you somehow became enlightened while you were like a fetus and I I've never never heard of any cases of that but children definitely can become enlightened

uh they have to be very ripe though I mean they have to be sort of like Teddy was where they're you know almost there before they're born and it doesn't take very much you know just like the touch of the razor on the head and that's it just

so yeah new age people would call them

old souls my father would have called
them old souls too

so I'll just move on to the next
question

man we're getting up to two hours

yep

I might have to start doing these daily
or something this is from achala
and uh agella says my parents want me to
get married and I also feel probably in
a year or two it's about time though
looking around how divorce due to
extramarital Affairs is becoming a
normal and common thing even in the
Indian culture
the concern of my parents and mine is

how to find a faithful traditional wife
I feel like I want to marry someone who
is Buddhist or has interest in the
teachings of Buddha how should I go
about it thank you well this is a tough
question partly because I really don't
know achala it sounds like maybe he's
ethnic Indian not necessarily living in
India

um

so I mean the traditional way is you
just let your parents deal with it and
they're the ones who fix you up but um
yeah it's it's it's a tough question
because sometimes you just can't be sure
you got to take the gamble you got to
take the risk

and uh if you find a girl that you think is the one and she's she seems like the right one that she's gonna be faithful and you're going to be faithful to her then uh it may be that you're you think it's worth the risk to uh take the chance on her

and it may be that it's just your karma that uh you're you're gonna be married to an Unfaithful woman or something but

you need to drink this

um if you want to find a woman who is Buddhist then you may have to try and find a good Buddhist group where you can meet but

um I mean obviously

most western Buddhist groups are

it's I mean it's hardly Buddhism at all

anymore maybe some some Elementary

meditation techniques a little bit of

poly jargon but um

or Sanskrit jargon or Chinese jargon or

whatever whatever jargon is associated

with that tradition

[Music]

um

yeah I mean you're just gonna have to do

the best you can because I I really

don't have enough data to really give

you advice

I mean I could say well she's she's like

uh six miles away heading due east and

just uh just heading that direction and
she'll be out in the front yard in a
blue dress

watering the flowers

but I I'm really I really can't say that

so you're just gonna have to you follow

your heart and uh use some

intelligence also use some wisdom and uh

just try to find a girl that you have

faith in that you trust

and if uh you sincerely love her

then uh

but but by love I'm not necessarily

meaning the intoxication of of the the

hormones you know the animal mating

instincts I mean that's that's

completely unreliable

but I mean if there's just a resonance
between you and you sincerely love each
other

then uh

yeah I think there's a good chance

you'll be doing fairly well but uh there
there's really no guarantees there's
there's no promises here

and uh I'm sorry I can't help you more
with that

so the next and last question of the
entire show

is from the Arya sawasti project

and the Aria swelocity project says if
someone has attained higher States Of
Consciousness through following the

precepts meditation Etc and are reborn
in that higher state what causes them to
revert back to human forms or lower
so how do you backslide from being in
heaven essentially because in Buddhism
heaven doesn't last forever
so what happens is you go up into heaven
and it may be you're in a lower level of
heaven where you're just indulging in
Celestial orgies with the harems of of
nymphs and so forth and just enjoying
sensual Pleasures you know the pleasured
gardens and the Golden Palaces and all
that and uh until eventually all you're
wallowing in uh
debauchery essentially just gives you

enough Bad Karma that you leave that
place and come back down as a human or
it may be worse than a human
um another possibility is you get up
into like a formless around like a
really Advanced Heaven round like a not
Advanced as in like necessarily you know
right at the Virgin Nirvana because
there's no Heaven realm that really
isn't the verge of Nirvana because
nibana is completely off the scale
you know nibbon is just kind of I mean
you can't say that the highest Heaven
realm is any closer than the lowest hell
in a way you can sort of but really it's
just totally off the scale so let's say
you're in some formless Realm

you know the realm of neither perception
nor non-perception the realm of Infinite
Space

well I mean there's not much going on
there I mean you're not making any new
Merit to keep you there and So
eventually the Merit that got you there
is just going to exhaust itself and once
it's exhausted then you come back down
again and that's generally the way it
works you get into some Heaven realm the
the Merit that got you up there
eventually runs out and you're not
making enough Merit up there just
because you know you're enjoying how
nice it is or whatever that you

eventually just come back down again

so that that can happen

and uh I think I just answered all the

questions by golly I hope I did

I mean uh there's a few questioners that

I'm not entirely sure I did Justice to

their questions but um I do my best and

if you've got questions about Buddhism

especially Buddhist philosophy Eastern

philosophy to some degree even Western

philosophy

um this Buddhist monasticism Burma me

personally any question you think I

might be able to answer you're very

welcome to ask them in the comments

below or if you have uh access to my

subscribe star account you can ask them

there or if you have access to my

Discord server you can ask them there

and uh be happy

hello and welcome to episode 50 of
question and answer I am your host Ponyo
Basa

and before I get started I'd like to
oh did you notice my new Fez

I just got it a few days ago I'm really
happy with this Fez I've been wanting a
fez for like decades literally but I
won't go into the entire story and uh
I'm just it's it's made by fezzo Rama
which uh you can look up on the internet
if you're interested if you want to get
a fez yourself these are I highly
endorse these these are very high
quality fezzes you can give you you can
get them with like little air vents on

top if you want and uh a wide variety of
Tassels

and I gotta admit my my sweetheart just
doesn't get it you know it's like

something about the female mind cannot
appreciate a really good Fez

and uh I mean I've noticed this sort of
thing before like for example

a couple of Christmases ago I decided
instead of sending out Christmas cards

to send out Rubber Chickens and there

are good ones too they're they were like

they were like this one

it was really really a good rubber

chicken

and uh she just didn't get it

but

I figured

you know it's just men or men and women
are women and uh women by dumb stuff too
you know it's like like curtains for
example

I mean we could just put a towel there
and everything would be fine we already
had curtains but she didn't like those
curtains they were too dark

so I mean it goes both ways I guess

I suppose before I uh just take up the
entire video praising this Fez

um well I'll say one more thing I had a
friend at work who advised me that I
should just wait until I get a really
profound question and then like

ceremoniously put on The Fez before
answering it you know it's got like the
eye of wisdom and all that but uh maybe
in future videos I might put on The Fez
for like a really difficult question
but um

I'm just showing off I'm flaunting it
you might say

so let's just uh start answering
questions here

and the first question is from a person
whose name I do not know how to
pronounce r i a a n

Rion Ryan

I don't know but this person says I'm in
South Africa a boar and not at all like
the ones Brian likes to interview that's

Brian Rue by the way I studied Kim Eng
and when I first saw him when I first
saw this when he says that he studied
I thought it was some sort of esoteric
Chinese practice

um maybe like uh

oh what's the uh what's the thing where
they they move in slow motion Tai Chi
but it turns out that this is short for
chemical engineering I'll just start
over

he says I'm in South Africa a boar and
not at all like the ones Brian likes to
interview I studied chemical engineering
not working because I'm white and I want
to know if the laws of conservation

thermodynamics

Etc agrees with Buddhism I remember a video where you said you also studied science I enjoy your videos and please forgive me for my stupid questions well there are no stupid questions there are only stupid people and anyone with a chemical engineering degree is not stupid

so

um with regard to Buddhism

um being in accordance or being in harmony with laws of conservation thermodynamics Etc

um

first of all Buddhism like pretty much all other religions is pre-scientific

they didn't have concepts of like
entropy and so forth that I'm aware of
um just like they didn't have concepts
of darwinian evolution you know they
just thought God most religions believe
you know just God just put us here fully
formed humans already speaking languages
already with a certain amount of culture
um

or in in the Buddhist uh the Buddhist
version We essentially descend from
heaven and our god-like beings at first
and then gradually

um I mean that's the kind of entropy
right there because we're going we're
devolving instead of evolving in a sense

and there are certain

psychic powers

that can cause one to defy the law of

conservation of matter for example one

can multiply one's body into many bodies

the the Hindus also have this belief

like Krishna famously did this on one

occasion in order to have sex with 500

women at the same time

um

so

you can

defy the law of conservation of matter

at the very least although I think in

modern physics under certain

circumstances that can happen anyway I'm

pretty sure I could be wrong

um

so

yeah it's I mean to the extent that it's an ancient Indian system that really didn't care about the laws of physics or or even really laws of nature other than laws of psychology Buddhism is is like a profoundly psychological spiritual system like ethics are psychological it doesn't matter what you do externally so much as what your mental states are what your motives were what the what the will was that caused you to do it that is the karma that is really the ethical quality of the action

so

I mean really early Buddhism really
didn't theorize about anything
like you read the Attica Wagga and it's
just saying a monk should have no
beliefs no view no nothing you know he
just should be I mean thoughts are going
to arise perceptions will spontaneously
occur but you don't cling to any of that
you don't attribute any special
significance to any of that
and that pretty much just
like erases the need to explain laws of
physics and so forth
um later on you had abhidham that
attempted to explain the the phenomenal
universe
and uh it was more Aristotelian than

scientific Aristotle was a genius
extremely intelligent guy but he just
did not have the Giants to stand on
their shoulders like like Newton did
so

um it was just ancient attempts at
describing the phenomenal Universe are
limited in that way although they
excelled at describing the internal
universe

and modern Western

Civilization pretty much sucks at that
so in a way what you do is if you want
to understand the phenomenal Universe
science is probably a better deal but if
you want to understand how to be happy

how to realize reality

you know how to be wise how to liberate
yourself from samsara that kind of thing
you're better off looking into Eastern
philosophy and there's not a whole lot
of competition between them and they can
fit together fairly well like the
Buddhist philosophy fits in fairly well
with modern scientific philosophy so
that's how I look at it anyway so
um my degree in biology has served me
well in helping to understand certain
things

you know just observing
like the various kinds of wasps in Burma
lots of wasps in the tropics and uh you
can just see just probably how they

evolved you know starting with these really primitive ones and then they start getting more and more advanced until finally you've got like social Colonial kind of of insects but uh I think I'll just move on to the next question here

and the next question is from crazy librarian

always have to have a beverage

and crazy librarian says

Bonte you have extensive Knowledge from

reading a lot do you still think

Buddhist practice makes sense for

enlightenment or is it nonsense

well this should be fairly

straightforward I mean I wouldn't still
be teaching Buddhism or answering
questions about Buddhism if I thought it
was just

um there are people that will watch
videos about Buddhism

and maybe study it a bit maybe even
practice it a bit and then finally
they'll just come to the conclusion that
it's all but I am not one of
those people because it's pretty obvious
that

there is a lot of wisdom in Buddhism it
may be that certain Orthodox Traditions
will have a fair amount of nonsense
mixed in because after all religions are
developed by human beings regardless of

any supposed

uh divine revelation

that it's human beings that it's going
through a filter of a human being and um
so there's there's going to be a fair
amount of nonsense regardless

fortunately this extra eye helps me to
uh avoid the the nonsense

and my my sweetheart says she will not
be seen in public with me wearing this
hat so it's going to be mainly just for
entertaining distinguished guests in my
home

so yeah obviously Buddhism contains a
great deal of wisdom I mean not a
hundred percent of what you find in the

books is going to be profile wisdom and
some of it you might as well just
dismiss or ignore

but um the whole idea that karma is a
mental state

that you know like I was just saying a
few minutes ago that um the ethical
quality of your actions depends on the
the mental states that a company of
those actions not the outward actions
themselves that sort of thing is is deep
even just like the second Noble Truth
that all suffering is caused by desire
or craving or attachment insisting upon
things being a certain way just sort of
being against the way things are that
that is the cause of all suffering

so

um yeah it's just obviously a lot of profound wisdom and Buddhism I think Buddhism like taravada Buddhism has the highest percentage of profound wisdom of of any religious system at least that according to my temperament I mean it's different people will have different temperaments and then they'll have different approaches to spirituality some people who are more like heart Centric you know more feelings oriented more faith oriented they want to believe in something they want to worship a higher being or something um you know Buddhism may not be for them

but for me

um I'm rather more philosophical than
religious I've got a certain mystical
streak

um I like something that makes good
sense like an elegant Theory and
Buddhism really is better than any other
system I've come across if I wasn't a
Buddhist

I'd probably have to be like a vedantist
Hindu or something

so I'll just move on to the next
question this is from CEO of action
and seal of actions says my question
wasn't very clear oh here he's referring
to a question he asked in the previous q
a and uh I didn't really get the

question apparently so he's asking it again in a different way

my point is that nibbana seems to be mentioned as cessation of Consciousness and that Consciousness arises only due to a cause it seems contradictory to nibana being an uncaused Consciousness that is signless boundless radiant all around

Etc how do we Square these two seemingly opposite statements

well

the cessation of Consciousness is the cessation of anaconda which is one of the five Aggregates that composes a human being or most sentient beings

he sent him being has a body I think

um

unless it's a perceptionless Brahma but

forget them

so

um yeah the when you're Anaconda is

consciousness and but it has to be

consciousness of something it's like the

essence of your mental States or the

underlying substratum of your mental

States

and so that ceases when you become

enlightened when you when you pass away

into nibana

then that is supposed to cease

but there are a few ancient texts that

do describe nibana as infinite formless

unmanifest Consciousness but the thing
is

when you have formless consciousness
infinite illuminous shining all around
and all that uh anything that's formless
and infinite is paradoxical and it just
goes off the scale like nibana is off
the scale

so

it's I've tried to explain this before
that when consciousness
becomes infinite and formless it becomes
like hegel's pure being which is
identical to Pure non-being because
there's no discernible content either
way in pure being or pure non-being

there's the same complete void of
discernible content and so they just
merge into each other and become one
that was how Hegel began his logical
dialectic

and I really do think there's something
to that that if Consciousness becomes
this infinite and formless

I mean it it's everything and nothing
simultaneously in a sense it's it's a
paradox it's off the scale and so you
can't really square that with anything
it's just a paradox I mean it's just
makes logic break down because when you
have Infinity

rationality cannot deal with infinity
there's always Paradox lurking around

the corner somewhere

so I'll just move on to CEO of action

and cod zidino's next question

checking to make sure I actually turned

on the video yes I did I don't have to

start over

and he says in the story of anguli Mala

when he was running after the Buddha He

commands him to stop but the Buddha

replies that he has already stopped have

you what did he mean by that well let's

answer the second part first

I assume when the Buddha says that he

has already stopped it means he has

stopped wandering loss through samsara

he has stopped wallowing in it that he

is enlightened that he's done with some
sorrow

and with regard to me
man

it's from The Terror from the Orthodox
point of view I'm not enlightened
because I still have like preferences
like

um

I was relatively stressed out this this
past weekend and we'll we'll get to that
because somebody asks me about that in
in one of the questions but um yeah I
mean it's just the the human system you
know following its its courses you know
following nature and so forth but um
yeah I mean to for me to claim that I'm

fully enlightened would be
um definitely unorthodox
and uh from a Mahayana point of view you
know we're all Buddha so I mean in that
sense I guess
but uh you're better off just not
thinking about that stuff really I mean
I mean no enlightened being is going to
be thinking in his heart oh I'm
enlightened you know so if you if you
say you are then that means you aren't
but if you say you aren't this you're
sort of like locking yourself into a box
so it's best just don't even think about
just do the best you can and uh you know
in a sense you're already perfect

because you can be yourself perfectly if
you can't do anything else perfectly you
can at least beat yourself absolutely
perfectly

so we'll just move on to seal of actions
next question

ah

and the boot of being injured rather
than killed for the karma might be
explained by the fact that the Buddha
said he can't be killed probably due to
his karma and he was injured by an
attempt to kill him but his cousin
dewadata it doesn't necessarily have to
be a later addition by people
increasing the status of the Buddha what
do you think about this you know this is

also a sort of a follow-up to
um a previous q a I think something that
I said in a previous q a where
um a Buddha can't be murdered that it's
just according to Orthodox terabond
tradition you cannot murder a Buddha the
worst you can do is make him bleed which
is what happened when David datta in one
of his attempts to kill the Buddha
according to the legends he tried to
roll a big boulder down onto him
and the bowler as it's crashing down the
hill it it's um
hits another rock or something and a
chip flies off and hits the Buddha's
foot and cuts the Buddha's foot and

makes him bleed

and for

the uh extremely unskillful Karma

of trying to kill the Buddha and

actually injuring him dewadata was

plunged into the lowest pits of hell

where he will burn in torment for

countless eons no doubt but in some

future age he is destined to become a

Pacheco Buddha so at least there is that

um

yeah

I mean the Buddha had excellent Karma I

suppose but but still

I mean Jesus got crucified Muhammad

Alana who was one of the Buddha's Chief

disciples was literally beaten to a pulp

um because he wasn't a Buddha so I do think that probably there is uh it's it's a certain amount of glorification of the Buddha and just a certain amount of mythologizing where you just can't kill a Buddha but who knows I mean that's just my guess my best guess because I really think the Buddha was an aura hunt and that the differentiation between Buddha and Aaron other than just you know the first R haunt in a lineage you know he had to like find the the method on his own but then again methods don't cause Enlightenment there isn't a path leading to Nirvana

that there's a path and you follow it
until you just don't need to follow it
anymore you just let go

so I think I'll just move on to seal
vaccine's next question

this is kind of a strange one what do
you think about doing a Meditation

Retreat in a white torture room the
point of this is that it is that it used
to be it is used as a way to torture
people from the lack of sensory
information but if you use it as a
meditator maybe it might have some use
well

um

first of all it would not be a good idea
to meditate in a torture room where

there are people have actually been
tortured because there's going to be
like a heavy vibe there you know there
could be like weird icky Spirits or
something there who's who might mess
with you so yeah I mean if there really
is a torture room or people have been
tortured

um

yeah I wouldn't try to meditate there I
mean you might meditate there as just
sort of uh a defense mechanism just keep
a steady home going or or budo or
something just as kind of a defensive
armor around your spirit or something
but

you know that kind of thing but uh
yeah I mean if you want to meditate you
could probably find a better place than
a torture room to do it but if if seal
of actions either not here he's just
talking about stop playing blank white
room yeah I I've done pretty much the
same I mean I've lived in caves
um caves that were dug in their man-made
caves and so they had just like flat
walls it wasn't all like stalagmites and
everything
still like tights I guess they're the
ones up high
um
yeah it's just blank it was light gray I
guess

and yeah I mean that's what you're
supposed to do like like in Zen
meditation usually they sit facing a
blank wall with their eyes open just
looking at a blank wall or I mean if
you're most terrible Auto Buddhist
Meditation the eyes are closed which is
just plain black
so yeah that sort of thing just like a
sensory deprivation boost yeah it could
be very helpful in meditation
if anything it offers fewer distractions
to distract you away from meditating
so let's move on to the next question
this is from David
and David says

um this actually isn't really a question

I guess

but anyway David says venerable

panielbasa I remember a case of a lady

with a much younger boyfriend who was a

semi-famous YouTuber from the UK she

went by a Buddhist name he basically

pimped her out

for 1500 pounds for sexual intercourse

and said she could provide healing

I won't mention their names they moved

to Thailand and she died on the back of

a moped her boyfriend was riding in a

horrific way he and she posted on

various Buddhist forums and Facebook

groups I thought at the time something

is going to happen to them as they were

exploiting Dharma it doesn't take much
digging to find out about the case I
wonder if you have any thoughts on this
gas show

um

um I've never heard of it or at least
maybe if I heard their names I might
recognize them but yeah it doesn't ring
any bells so I apparently

I'm at this moment I'm unaware of who
they are I'm all I know about them is is
in this little paragraph here
and uh

I would say yeah they're probably making
a lot of Bad Karma this

um perverting Dharma just as a way of

having sex and making money getting famous that kind of thing I mean that's in a way it's sort of uh verging towards what is considered to be the worst thing a monk can possibly do like before parajika rules there are four rules that if a monk breaks any of them he is excommunicated for life and they are an ascending order of of seriousness I mean they're all bad enough that you're communicated one is is having sex with with a woman with a man with an animal whatever if you have sex you're out two is stealing stealing anything worth more than uh a coin in the Buddhist time called a pada I'm going to have to get into that third

is murder or also talking someone into committing suicide helping a woman get an abortion anything like that but then worse even than murder is the fourth one which is knowingly lying about having attained superhuman mental States and uh I mean if she's saying that she can heal people through uh having sex with them yeah that could be I mean she wasn't an ordained monk or none but still I mean it's the same kind of thing that they're doing which is pretty serious it's it's not good to knowingly and willingly pervert Dharma for your own personal gain and like worldly like mundane game besides

so yeah I agree

that what they were doing was not so good and probably deep down they kind of knew that and that might have helped the horrible moped accident to occur

so we'll just move on to the next question

and this is from Rick

and uh

let's see Rick Rick sometimes asks kind of personal questions although that's fair game I'm not complaining at all his first question is what have you learned over the course of these q a sessions well one of the main things I've learned from these q and A's is that Western Buddhists still think like westerners

that they still think in terms of a
mechanistic scientific materialistic
universe

and so

um like one of the most common kinds of
questions I get is you know is such and
such an action Good Karma or Bad Karma
or along those lines and I have to keep
repeating that karma is a mental state
karma is really the will that
accompanies the action you know that
motivates the action

and uh I mean there's there's a few
questions in this q a there's there's
always at least one or two it seems
where the the supposition

is that

the scientific uh world view that is

endorsed by Western modern Western

Society is just correct that's just the

way things are and you have to like fit

Buddhism into that Matrix or context

somehow

and I don't think it works that way at

all tell you the truth the scientific

Universe it's

it's not ultimately real I mean it's

it's stable you know it's like that's

one thing that that makes the scientific

universe so powerful

I mean just just the the ideology you

know just the belief in it is that it it

accounts for everything so

remain better and More concretely in
more detail than any other system that's
come up that it really lends a lot of
stability to I mean our world
essentially because I'm not a
materialist

but whether that just confused everybody
or not I'm not sure

but that's the main that's one of the
main things I've learned in the course
of these q and A's is that Western
Buddhists think like Western Scientific
materialists and then they're just kind
of I mean not all of them but it's a
tendency and then you try to fit
Buddhism into that you know like asking

if Buddhism is in accordance with the
scientific laws and so forth

um

and it just I don't think that the
scientific universe is the correct
universe or like the real it's not
reality

in fact nothing that we can see with our
minds nothing that is perceived is
reality because perceptions are just
like a symbol in your mind

and that's that's all we see we look
around all we see is is mental symbols
because it's all being filtered through
our brain or filtered through our our
mind our perceiving mind

so let's move on to Rick's next question

here

after I take a drink

what is the greatest challenge you are currently facing yeah that's I mean this is a timely question because I have been facing a real weird challenge over the past more than a week and that is that

as some of you may know I work at a sheet metal shop

but I happen to meet a guy who happened to be the manager of a different sheet metal shop and he liked me and he offered me a job working at his sheet metal shop and he was paying a lot more and they have better benefits

so I decided to go for it put in my two
and a half weeks notice I put it in a
little early and then about a week later
the boss presented me with a non-compete
agreement that I had signed

so

I'm just reading this non-compete
agreement and pretty obviously it
applies only to sales and management
positions and I'm just some Grunt in
back in the warehouse running machines
so it was pretty clear that it didn't
apply to me but the manager at the place
I'm working at now is has been persuaded
by somebody else higher up than him I
guess that yeah this just means that
nobody working at that sheet metal shop

can work at any other sheet metal shop
within 100 mile radius because it you
sign the paper but

um

there's another Proviso that you're not
allowed to

divulge confidential information or

Trade Secrets but the list of Trade

Secrets is like customer lists and

marketing strategies and so forth that

also applies only to

um sales and and management

so anyway I thought that that wouldn't

be a problem but this new place that

wants to hire me they've got my

employment now on hold because the legal

department has to like examine this
non-compete agreement and I mean they're
just taking their own sweet time and I'm
not going to quit this job and then wind
up having that job not pan out so I've
just been in limbo for over a week just
not knowing where I'm going to be
working a week from now
or two weeks from now
and uh it's uh surprisingly stressful I
mean I have lost quite a lot of sleep
just
trying to understand the non-compete
agreement is trying trying to find
anything that would apply to me so that
I couldn't work at the other place and
just like running through these

imaginary discussions with the manager
like how am I going to deal with this
and what I'm going to do and
it's some sorrow which is uh intensified
for laypeople
to some degree but yeah that's that's
the greatest challenge that I'm
currently facing that I'm aware of who
knows it could be something else even
worse that
um I'm not paying attention to it or
something
so I'll just move on to Rick's next
question
putting aside any learned Dogma or
philosophy when all else fails do you

have a core belief instinct or face that
guides encourages or replenishes you
well yeah I've got a few
some of them I'm not sure I mean it
guides me but it may not replenish me
all that much well first is I'm just not
a materialist that I think that we are
in a dream
you know and some people could say like
a simulation you know we're living in
what they the the Hindu is called Maya
the illusion that this is not reality
and I've I remember just as a teenager
starting to read Eastern philosophy or
it's saying that it's all an illusion
and I'd just be going yeah and I didn't
even understand it really I couldn't

really explain why it was all an
illusion but it just it just struck a
chord

and

so I'm like I sincerely believed that my
mental States when I answered the phone
are going to influence at least
potentially who's at the other end of
the phone even though the phone's
already ringing that kind of a thing
which could be considered insane
to a scientific materialist but as I say
I'm not one of those even though I have
to admit scientific materialism is very
explanatory with regard to
the external world

uh another thing that guides me but may not replenish me is the idea that I've gone with since before I was a Buddhist that positive and negative have to balance out in the long run you know what I sometimes I used to joke that that's how God created the universe out of nothing he just created all these positives and negatives you know pluses and minuses that just balance balance each other out they just balance out to zero so it all adds up it all adds up to zero

so I've always been kind of uh wary if I start feeling too much happiness because it's like I'm setting myself up for some of the opposite or

I've been wary of like intense pleasure
because there's like this deep down
feeling that there's gonna have to be
some intense displeasure to balance that
out

so

also

I've had this just intuitively since I
was a kid I think

just a real wariness about big Karma
like killing something or

um no I mean I'm not comparing killing
something with this next one but just
like getting married you know it's just
it's just this big thing and I always
kind of will stand offside about that

even though now I'm engaged to be married and uh no regrets there so but it's still it's like I've throughout my life I've had this wariness of not wanting to do any kind of big Karma even choosing a profession you know choosing a job I mean that's one reason why this this past week has been kind of stressful for me because it's

um you know major change in in environment and so forth

so I think I'll just move on to Rick's next question

which is what are your thoughts on the interplay of Free Will and fate

well I haven't had a free will question

lately but I mean I'm skeptical of the
the very existence of free will because
I mean Free Will is logically impossible
I mean just setting all else aside
Free Will is logically impossible I mean
anything has to have a cause or not have
a Cause including like a decision
so a decision has a cause or it doesn't
have a cause it has a cause then it is
determined by that cause and is not free
but if it doesn't have a cause then it
happens at random and neither
determinism nor random chance
our free will but those are like your
only two options unless you have like a
mixture of the two

um so I mean you can have like
a certain causation or determinism with
a little bit of like Quantum Randomness
at like the the level of
neurotransmitters or something
and

someone that said well the Free Will is
the cause but I mean there has to be a
reason

you know I mean if you make a decision
there has to be a reason for that
decision or else it's just a random
decision

and neither one is free will but then I
read the trickster in the Paranormal by
George P Hansen I think is his name
and he gave

an interesting insight into
the I don't think he even was mentioning
free will but he was mentioning
meditation and how meditation is
reflexive it means it's self-referential
and anything that is self-referential
can become paradoxical
and that could somehow paradoxically the
fact that we are self-conscious that we
are observing our own mind can somehow
paradoxically cause Free Will of A Sort
to exist Ramana maharshi who is a great
Saint even though he was a Hindu used to
say that the only real free choice you
have is the choice to be mindful or not
which uh because it was said by such an

advanced Saint I wouldn't uh dismiss it
out of hand

but in the text in the polytexts

the Buddha dismisses both Free Will and
determinism there was a a religion an
ancient religion that is now extinct
called the ajivakas

who were strict determinists they

believed that you lived I think it was
84 000 lifetimes

84 000 lifetimes in succession and the

the simile in the polytics is that you

got a ball of a string and you just kind
of tossed the ball of string holding on
to one end and it just unrolls until
it's all gone

so yeah the Buddha said that's just

really a pernicious wrong view that you could actually go to hell for believe in that sort of thing

but uh he also dismisses free will like in the anata

he's saying that will or caitanya you know it's not you you don't have control you don't have total control over it so that's one reason why there is no self is because we don't even have control over our own decisions

so the interplay of Free Will and fate yeah it's more like an interplay of um

sort of determinism on the one hand but then like maybe this paradoxical

um self-referential

conversion of free will that you can't
really be explained logically that that
can influence that

but

um I think you could probably go insane
or or definitely warp your brain just
trying to really figure it out

so I'll just move on to Rick's next
question

let's see I almost asked the same
question twice here not here have you
ever been a fan of any Combat Sports
what kind of penance would a monk have
to do if you were found watching boxing
or MMA

well

um

I've never really been a real fan of Combat Sports I mean my mother used to watch wrestling when I was a kid and I used to root for the bad guys just to bug her

um

I have watched a little bit of the Mixed Martial Arts stuff that where they fight in the Octagon I think almost all of it that I've ever seen was on one occasion when I was in Burma and a friend of mine from America came to visit me and so we went to Pagan which is like one of the main places where tourists go in in Burma and we were at this hotel called

the beetle nut and my friend you went out to eat dinner somewhere and because I was a monk at the time I didn't eat dinner so I just stayed in the hotel room the beetle nut hotel and uh saw it was on TV and it was this fighting in the Octagon which was really fascinating I mean it was really interesting I can understand how people would be into it more so than boxing which has become just really a lot of hype just multi-million dollar hype kind of stuff um

so I mean I've never been a real fan I mean I guess you can consider NFL football to be a kind of combat sport I mean it's sort of like a cross between

war and chess

but uh I lost interest in that after I

became a monk and never regained

interest because there it seems like

they're a bunch of spoiled Communists

who hate on America Now

so

I guess I'll just move on to the next

part of this question which is what kind

of penance would a monk have to do if

you were found watching boxing or MMA if

he had to make special effort to watch

it for entertainment I suppose that

could be considered a ducata offense

which is the most minor level of offense

and he just confess it to another Monk

and that would be it

so it's not really a big deal

I mean if if you actually went to a

Battlefield

yeah I'm not I mean I'm not sure what

kind of Combat Sports they had in

Ancient India in the Buddhist time so

that I mean there may not have been a

precedent for it they may not have been

like the Indian version of boxing or the

Prem pancration or anything like that

martial arts displays

or exhibitions or whatever but they did

have battlefields and uh it is

an offensive medium severity for a monk

to go visit a battlefield or go to watch

an army On Maneuvers that sort of thing

but still just make confession and
that's good enough
so I'll just move on to Rick's next
question

have you seen the house Builder will he
build your house again well this is sort
of in different words a question that
I've just answered the house Builder the
Buddha according to the polytext he had
two different sets of first words after
it became enlightened an orthodox
tradition explains that by saying well
he thought one set of words but he said
out loud the other set of words and it
was both both sets of words were poetry
and uh I'm sorry I didn't look it up

beforehand I used to have all this
memorized in poly but um
there's this one part where he says
house Builder you are seeing you will
never build this house again you know
along those lines and he's referring to
kind of Mara but also sort of like the
personification of samsara itself where
the house is your own body
you know it's like the house Builder is
like your own Karma
um but it's in a way it's kind of
personified here you know symbolized
and um
will he build your house again well I
guess we'll have to wait and see but um
yeah with regard to seeing the house

Builder

when you have mystical experiences I
mean you can get glimpses but uh I
didn't become like the the perfect
terravana Buddhist Saint with you know
no more akuselah karma you know no more
on wholesome thoughts
because I can still be irritated
I can still uh I don't know have desires
preferences and so forth
like I prefer this to water
foreign
so I'll just move on to Rick's next
question
will your sweetheart ever make a guest
appearance in any of your videos I doubt

it because she really doesn't put
herself out there

and um you know she just kind of a
private person

doesn't really have a presence on on
YouTube unless it's maybe just verbal
like like comments or something

and she's definitely not going to appear
on a video if I'm wearing this Fez

that's that's pretty clear

so I'll just move on to Rick's next and
last question

do you have any first or secondhand
knowledge or experience with magical
powers what are your thoughts on the
possible attainment of magical powers
um I'm not exactly sure what

Rick here has in mind with regard to the
word magical I mean does that just mean
psychic powers
or does it mean like
Witchcraft and sorcery
because there is kind of a difference
I would say that psychic powers occur
through
um like meditation
and just uh like intensive
self-discipline
of the sort that which is probably don't
and don't do
like witches and and like Sorcerers and
so forth
um my father trained witches he was kind

of a like a witch he led a coven at one time uh of like a board housewife which is and uh his description of how it worked at least in his coven is you get a group of people together and you have them reciting the incantations and moving their bodies in a rhythmic way so that they kind of get a group mind going they're all thinking the same thing and then they focus their minds on what they want done and you've got like this group of people you know each one might have this little spark of psychic Talent or at least a few of them do and when they're all focusing on the same thing trying to accomplish the same thing then it increases the power of that and can

actually cause something to happen
whereas with psychic powers like that a
saint would have it's my opinion that
for the most part they're spontaneous
they're not like done by force of
willpower that is just they're liminal
people and just like strange things
happen spontaneously
so with regard to strange things
happening spontaneously yeah I've got
quite a lot of experience with that like
like old synchronicity just pounding
wages again and again and again but with
regard to actual magic like Witchcraft
and so forth Just I have like
second-hand knowledge because of my

father mainly who as I say used to train
which is and ran a coven and also he had
certain stories about

um Eskimo shamans and so forth that uh
I'm not sure whether they would be doing
magical powers or or just the the more
spiritual psychic stuff but he had this
one story about this Eskimo Shaman who
lived in Alaska

and he would go into like these trans
states where he would look like he was
dead I mean heart rate and breath would
almost stop and when he was in those
states he could teleport I'm not
vouching this is really this is just
what my father told me and he heard it
from somebody else I'm sure

and so there was uh in Southeast Alaska
there was actually a kind of bulletin
out for police officers that if you find
an old Eskimo man Lying by the side of
the road don't bury him because he could
be in this kind of Trans State and so
according to the story
in this Eskimo shaman
um you know he was found in this
comatose you know seemingly dead State
he was brought into a police station and
the police officer there had heard about
him and so he's calling a different
police officer on a on a different
island in the Aleutian Islands and
asking him about it and and uh the other

guy says well you can't be can't be the
guy you're talking about because like
he's right here with me and so then the
the first police officer goes and looks
and the the shaman is gone
so he just somehow disappeared in one
place and reappeared in some other place
like 50 miles away
uh but whether that's magical or not I
don't know whether that's psychic powers
or what it is
so yeah I do have some
especially second-hand knowledge of uh
Magic and uh like certain psychic powers
I mean there's all kinds of stories
about witches in Burma but uh don't get
me started on that so I'll just uh move

on to the next question and this is from
a person who used to have a name that
was easy to pronounce and then they
switched it to this which I mean this
could just be just sheer perversity here
because it's spelled
c-h-r-z-a-s-z-c-z I mean how do you
pronounce that because access is
something like that that's about as
close as I'm gonna get so anyway because
axis is says is there anywhere in the
rules of monastic discipline that you
have to shave your eyebrows
or someone invented that later and then
uh he he left this comment
um under a YouTube video

and uh somebody else replied to his
comment somebody named Don said I was
going to ask that question why the shave
eyebrows rule eyebrows are essential
partly for directing
dripping sweat from your forehead away
from your eyes because surely sweat in
one's eyes while trying to meditate
would be quite a distraction seems like
a rather unnecessary handicap for a
middle path

and I would just say that there is no
rule of monastic discipline saying that
a monk has to shave his eyebrows that is
entirely a tie thing maybe Cambodian
monks also or Laotian monks because
they're kind of bordering on Thailand

towards the east

but Burmese monks don't shave their
eyebrows Sri Lankan monks don't shave
their eyebrows and the story I heard to
explain why Thai monks shaved their
eyebrows is that

um in previous centuries Burma and
Thailand were Arch enemies they were
kind of like Sparta and Athens or
like England and France they were just
traditional Arch enemies and
sometimes spies would be sent into
Thailand Burmese spies would be sent
into Thailand disguised as monks and
vice versa you'd have amongst disguised
coming the other way to into Burma

and so

the ties started shaving their eyebrows

in order to differentiate

the the time monks from the Burmese

spies so then the Burmese spies started

shaving their eyebrows but then the Thai

spies in Burma would catch them when

they came back so you have Thai spies in

Burma looking for monks with no eyebrows

and then they know those are Burmese

spies

so that's the story I was told because

really it just says you have to shave

your head hair and I mean technically

your eyebrows are on your head but um I

mean nobody's like clipping off their

eyelashes or anything like that

so I mean mainly it's just the hair on your head and your facial hair has to be shaved at least every two months or every two finger widths whichever comes first

so I mean a monk can look like a sailor you know he can have like an inch long beard and inch long hair and still not be in violation of the rules although I think Burmese monks generally shave once a week

some of them don't even have an official hair to bother shaving so they pluck the hairs out which is technically against the rules

and with regard to Don's comment here

about the purpose of eyebrows I had some insight into eyebrows this is sort of the biologist in me speaking now in that there's a Botanical Garden in Burma near the town of pianulu in it's really a nice Botanical Garden too and they've got Gibbons there

and these Gibbons are completely black this their whole body is black except they've got two white eyebrows right here

and I mean it's just white fur surrounded by black fur so I mean there's no real

um purpose for those eyebrows other than as uh like for communication like non-verbal communication and I assume

that's one of the main reasons we have eyebrows is that it's useful in non-verbal communication because primates especially have lots of non-verbal Communication in addition to spoken language you know facial expressions and so forth also are key ways that we communicate with each other so in addition to a little bit of eye protection and as Don says keeping the sweat from dripping into your eyes um I think it's also there just for non-verbal communication so I'll just move on to zax's next question

[Music]

what was your favorite food that you
were getting sometimes in Burma
well

there's there's a few Foods in Burma
that are good then I looked forward to
getting I was happy when I got them
but you don't really see them in America
one is at least in Burmese it's called
and in English I think they're called
jenko beans I actually saw them at an
Asian grocery store last time I went to
an Asian grocery store with my
sweetheart and I was all excited she
didn't understand but then again she
doesn't understand feathers or Rubber
Chickens either so
but it's it grows on a tree

and it looks sort of like a lentil it's
sort of like an olive drab color and
it's about this big around and about
that thick and it smells like pee
because it's got urea in it or something
and I guess you're supposed to soak it
to get the urea out and the first time I
ever got any of that I had no idea what
it was I didn't know if it was I mean it
smelled like pee and it was kind of a
I don't know it wasn't like a vegetable
kind of color so I thought maybe it was
some kind of kidney but I'm thinking
what kind of animal has round kidneys
but it turns out it's really good jingle
beans also there's a kind of noodle soup

called mojinga that is really good it's like a traditional Burmese food you get it a lot in Burma

um custard apples the only time I ever ate custard apples was in Burma I looked around here in in South Carolina

no custard apples but they're kind of fruit like about this big and they look kind of like an artichoke and you break them open and it's full of like this

custardy stuff and lots of kind of

large-ish black seeds that you spit out

you know you bite into it and then you

spit the seeds out so it's good to eat

them outside otherwise you can annoy

women that don't like seeds on the floor

let's see what else nappy I used to like

which is a kind of fermented fish paste
but uh all in all my fear I guess I just
I'd say jingle beans

I really like jingle beans I mean you
can't eat a whole lot of them because I
guess it's

got urea in it or something so it's bad
for your kidneys if you just like gorge
on jingle beans all the time but
um I don't think there's any danger of
that

here in America

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from a v s t r

a v s t r i don't know what it stands
for

and uh avstr says first a follow-up question to Stevie's question about ordaining with chronic illness that was also in the previous q a what would be the Orthodox response to someone who wanted to ordain but should or could not do so because of disability or illness should they gain as much Merit in this life as possible and hope to be reborn with the potential to become a monk

I guess from a Mahayana Viewpoint something like being reborn in the pure land would be the answer and what would be your personal advice to such a person um yeah I mean if you have a kind of disability where

um it's just not convenient for you to
become a monk let's say you have to take
a certain medication or get certain
treatments that cost money
on a regular basis you'd have to have
some kind of sponsor that would agree to
pay for that
you know while you're a monk and then
then you could go ahead but just to just
go out there renounce the world and like
you know head for Asia or something and
then you need this medicine that you
can't even get out in the sticks in you
know rural southeast Asia yeah that's
not going to work
so someone who does have

um like a chronic ailment regardless of whether they want to become a monk or not certainly that is the fruition of past Karma

so yeah there's something was done that shouldn't have been done in in the past either in your own present life or in a previous existence or some such

and uh yeah it's causing difficulties now

so

um yeah I mean if someone was too unhealthy to become a biku and you should be healthy if you're going to be a baker especially if you're going to be like the traditional kind of Monk who's wandering from place to place wandering

into the village to get your food people
to put in whatever food they want and
then you come back you're living in the
tropics where health is kind of an issue
anyway I mean I've had malaria in like
seven or eight times always the worst
kind too

so yeah I mean if any kind of chronic
ailment would be considered

um the fruition of of past comma like
accusala or or Bad Karma

and um yeah the best thing that a person
would do in that case if they couldn't
become a monk but they wanted to would
be to earn as much Merit as you can
especially if you could earn Merit in a

in a health oriented way you know help other people be healthy you know feed hungry kids or you know like um just I guess you could donate to a medical now there's like a group of doctors that travel the world and cure cataracts for example they do cataract surgeries out in like rural Nepal and so forth that uh you know contributing to that might help especially if you had an eye problem

um you know try to earn Merit that is sort of you know in a in a health oriented Direction and that would probably be most effective

so I guess I'll just move on to AV str's

next question

secondly do Devas remember their past lives I think I remember hearing Buddhas do if so isn't there in a sense a self or person that is in fact reborn even if there is no soul since they live on as the memories of the Deva or Buddha would that not contradict the symbol you made which I found very useful about rebirth being like pushing down a bulge in a mat the Bulge will simply reappear somewhere else but there is no self that is being reborn the karma is only transferred so to speak yeah well I mean you push down a lump in a carpet and then it just comes up somewhere else I mean it would

still have the pretty much the same
qualities as the lumpy just pushed down
to do the conservation of matter let's
say

so

you know it's much more complicated than
that with regard to rebirth and this
Karma perpetuating itself but the thing
is even though you could say that the
stream of karma

um you know it's the only thing that
moves from One Life to the next
according to Orthodox taravada the only
thing you take with you to your next
life is your karma
and so

I mean the karma itself is constantly

changing it's sort of like a flame you know it's not the same flame from one moment to the next it's not exactly the same karma from one more to the next even though there's certain resemblance a certain continuity from one moment to the next but us also in addition to that it's just not ultimately real so I mean in a sense you can say that there is a self but it's not an ultimately real self in the by the same token and this is this is a weird thing I've written about this before it's like Buddhists who say there is no self well admit okay in a worldly conventional sense there is a self

but even so even in a worldly
conventional sense there is no soul but
I would say I mean why not like at a
higher Dimension like like uh a four or
five dimensional being which would
include all of your all of your
existences and so forth that I mean that
could be considered to be like an over
self
or a soul if you want to use that word
but even that isn't ultimately real
so in a in a conventional sense you
could say yeah there is a self or yeah
there is a soul but in the ultimate
sense there is no self and there is no
soul unless you want to say the soul is
Brahman like in the upanishads but

um you'd make the mistake of reapplying
the ultimate if you're like saying yep
it's Brahman you know Atman is Brahman
which is a mistake that they make

um and I sort of flogged this over and
over again that um

you can't really reify the ultimate or
the absolute because you're dealing just
with Concepts and it's not really the
absolute at all

so I think I'll just move on to the next
question this is from Austin

and Austin says I don't think

Consciousness is replicable or even a
computation I'm not even convinced that
the brain produces Consciousness which

leads me to doubt the idea of being in a simulation How likely do you think it is we live in a simulation well I assume Austin here is talking about a computer simulation that we're like in some virtual reality possibly programmed by some alien kid with an IQ of 900 for a like a school science project or something

but

I do think that this world we live in is not ultimately real so in a sense it is a simulation but it's not so much a computer simulation as it is like a dream a mental simulation and it's just one of the infinite number of virtual statues that can exist in the

uncarved block of marble the nameless

uncarved block

with regard to Consciousness not being

replicable or even a computation

um

yeah I'm not even sure convinced that

the brain produces Consciousness well I

don't think the brain produces

Consciousness either I mean there's no

scientists are just at a total loss in

explaining how this gray blob of meat

with these electrochemical reactions

going on inside creates like subjective

experience

you know how do chemicals become

conscious they can't explain that they

don't know they I mean they just don't
so it's one thing that science has been
totally unable to explain
and I do think that the entire universe
is conscious that um
you know like hydrogen atom isn't
thinking you know it's not
philosophizing it doesn't have
preferences or anything but it contains
like this Teensy spark you know this
primordial little spark of Consciousness
that has to be like organized and
complexified and utilized in order for
it to turn into like what a psychologist
would call a conscious mind
so I mean the mind of a goldfish is way
simpler than us in the mind of a of like

an amoeba would I mean it's just this
primordial little spark you could say or
you could have a materialist scientist
type say no an amoeba would have no mind
at all a plant would have no
consciousness at all because they don't
have a nervous system they don't have a
brain but then again they can't even
begin to explain how a brain creates
consciousness

it is through the I mean damage to the
brain damages mental mental function so
I mean they've got that going for them
you know you you damage the back of the
brain you can go blind you damage I
think it's what the right temporal lobe

and you know you go tone deaf you know
you can't enjoy music anymore that kind
of thing the the with the left I think
it's the left temporal lobe and you
can't speak anymore
so obviously the brain is doing
something with Consciousness but I don't
think it's generating any more than a
computer is generating the electricity
that it is like organizing and utilizing
but with regard to Austin's question
here How likely do you think it is we
live in a simulation uh if you take away
the computer part then it's pretty darn
likely because uh yeah this is Maya
and uh but let's go to a computer
simulation

um

I don't think it's very likely

it's more more a dream than a computer
generated virtual reality

so I'll just move on to the next

question this is from Stevie

and Stevie says what are the two sutas

that mention nibana as infinite formless

Consciousness I've been Googling my

little heart out to no avail

well the two sutas that have the same

verse in which

very probably pretty obviously nibbana

is described as infinite formless

Consciousness spect I think I've got

right here this is piku bodhi's

translation though

it's uh the Consciousness that makes no
showing and in becoming about to just
become

not claiming being with respect to all
God that's awful yeah see bikubody is
very Orthodox so he's like doing the
best he can to try and interpret this in
an orthodox way and it's not working but
uh yes

[Music]

that's the poly and when Yana means
Consciousness

is not showing so I was like unmanifest
anandam is endless or infinite and
means shining all around
so that that verse is found in the

kewata suta of the diganikayan which is
number 11 and also the Brahman
nimandanika suta which is Maji minikaya
number 49. they both contain that same
verse

and it's pretty obviously with regard to
nibana

and bikubody trying to be Orthodox

um he just kind of butchered it I think
so we'll just move on to the next

question this is also from Stevie why do
you never take why did you never take on
any disciples you seem to love helping
others deepen their knowledge of the
dhamma well I was willing

um but when I was a monk for the most

part I was living just way the hell out
in the middle of nowhere like in caves
in forests and so forth

um didn't meet a whole lot of of other
Western monks

um I used to think about him it'd be
nice like giving getting to name new
monks like I like the name munigosa for
some reason

and so I just come up with or like such
a Dasa slave to truth something like
that as I I would be good at naming
disciples and I did have a few like
informal ones mainly in Burma

but um

yeah for some reason I just have this
Karma it's I don't have good luck with

teachers and it's just some sort of
teacher disciple Karma that that hasn't
been fully developed in me yet I don't
have to par on me for that or something
but I was willing and it just didn't
happen

so I'll just move on to the next
question I mean it probably would have
happened if I wound up becoming the
Abbot of this Monastery in Burma that I
almost became the habit of in which case
I probably would still be in Burma to
this day
but it just fell through and didn't
happen so here I am wearing a fez that's
one of the advantages of not being a

Mongol that my sweetheart would consider
it to be

um a disadvantage is that when you're a
monk you can't wear a fez it's it's
against the rules for a monk to wear a
hat so all these monks were in stocking
caps technically it's against the rules
but if they're like in Northern Canada
or Denmark and during the winter time or
something then uh yeah it's

understandable it's a very minor rule

anyway I need to adjust my tassel here

there we go

so let's see what was I looking for here

uh no

see oh why I never took on any disciples

I just completely forgotten the question

um yeah I mean it was just I was too remote and uh I'm just too much of a niche teacher you know some of most most people they want to become a monk they want

um something Orthodox you know they want to be able to trust the polytext and not have the the rug yanked out from under them again and again because I'd be a hard ass of a teacher I might not beat the mistakes like the proverbial zen master but huh

yeah I was I was like radically strict with regard to rules of monastic discipline up until I came back to America

then I started fudging on them and
that's one reason why I dropped out it's
like if I'm not gonna follow the rules
strictly why I shouldn't be a monk
so I'll just move on to the next
question oh and also now I'm working in
a sheet metal shop so if I have any
disciples it might be with regard to how
to run machines or something
so the next question is from Marco
and Marco says Buddha said that he did
extreme practice before Enlightenment
because he was mocking some other man in
many of his past lives he was also doing
that kind of practice can you explain
how does karma like that work well I've
never heard this before and I doubt that

that's exactly what was happening
um before the Buddha became enlightened
he practiced the two main routes the
traditional routes to Enlightenment that
were prevalent in the Ganges Valley in
in the 5th Century BCE and that's
meditation and asceticism
and with regard to asceticism he was
going full blast he wasn't half killing
himself just to to mock some other
person

um I mean he was he was totally sincere
in starving himself almost to death and
you know as he reads some of the
descriptions of what he went through
where you know if he touch his belly he

could feel his spine and if you rub his
arm hairs they would just break off
they're all brittle from just
malnutrition and just wandering around
naked and and just wearing tree bark
sometimes and just eating cow cow poop
and this kind of stuff I mean it was
really extreme and I doubt that he was
going to do that kind of stuff just to
make fun of somebody
that he was following the tradition of
ancient India and that's there are a lot
of people saying if you want to become
enlightened you've got to just purify
yourself through this fire of asceticism
and so
he uh he tried that and it didn't work

and so he also tried uh like the cultivation of of Jannah States like maybe trance States also just he was following the traditional meditation techniques also and that didn't work either

So eventually he found his own way and started teaching it and thus Buddhism began

but with regard to how does karma like that work yeah I don't think that the Buddha was was behaving that way that that was not his motivation

so

that kind of uh

I mean it kind of messes up the question

now because I'm not exactly sure how to answer it

uh but I don't think he was mocking some other man by uh practicing severe austerities

uh can you explain how does karma like that work

um yeah I don't think it did work that way I guess that would be my answer

so I mean if he was practicing Karma just for the sake of

dissing somebody else then it would not be skillful action it wouldn't be a right practice

so it wouldn't be right action for example

so it probably wouldn't have worked

anyway

so I'll just move on to Marco's next question here

there are some people who after the heavy accident have a change of Personality they are more aggressive or they can even speak languages they have never been able to before is it possible that some other Consciousness has replaced the old one well that reminds me of a really interesting story in a book by Ian Stevenson Dr Ian Stevenson who was I think he was a psychologist at some place like the University of Virginia and he was doing

his best to scientifically investigate
uh the possibility of reincarnation
and there's one interesting story from
India this was like back in the early
70s I think of this boy who was maybe
seven or eight years old and he got
smallpox and he apparently died and so
his father left the house to go and take
care of the funeral arrangements because
his boy just died but when he came back
the boy was alive and he's claiming to
be a different person he's claiming to
be a certain person I mean he knew the
name he was a brahmana of a certain cast
he would no longer eat his parents food
he wouldn't eat his mother's cooking
because she was of a lower caste and so

they had to have this brahmana lady who was like a neighbor cook his food that's the only way he'd eat it and he just insisted he was this other person and he had quite a lot of information about this other person that he shouldn't have known

so I mean it can happen that way even though theravada Buddhism doesn't really acknowledge the possibility of this I mean the world is pretty strange and it doesn't just fit into like cookbook explanations and definitions and so forth sometimes

so yeah I think it is possible that like somebody

they not only have a near-death
experience but their mind really does
pass on and the body maybe is still
viable and so some other Spirit comes in
I think that is possible
but I think for the most part
um the the major changes of Personality
could be caused just from the severe
illnesses just kicking them out of a rut
and they're having to examine their life
seriously for the first time maybe or
um it could be like a near-death
experience that they have
um like some some people have had famous
like Ramen amaharshi for example have
like a near-death experience and uh I
mean that just kicked him right into

enlightenment

so I assume that sometimes you can get
kicked into something that isn't

Enlightenment but is considerably
different like significantly different
from your your previous personality so I
think both of those are possible I think
probably the first

um the kind of where uh like a different
spirit is moving in a different karmic
stream is inhabiting the body would be
much less common than just a person who
they're like a superficial person who
doesn't really think deeply about things
and then they get cancer or something
and all of a sudden they start thinking

deeply about things and it just changes
their personality that way I think that
is much more common

so I'm just going to move on to the next
question

after taking another drink

God this is a nice fast I mean it's
really high quality too

this is from Stevens

and Stephen says here's a question I
often feel like I'm becoming a recluse
because I have practically no
responsibilities and few needs
and I

noticed most connections that I make
naturally erode because I usually am
lacking the motivation to put in the

constant effort required to maintain things a part of me feels guilty and says I should have more responsibilities but I generally dislike dealing with people now and feel it's useless and futile to get involved with people and Society in general I can't force myself to do supposedly fun activities I can't even force myself to play video games or watch movies anymore I can't even force myself to stay addicted to drugs and alcohol these days and within the first half hour of being around a woman I generally begin to try and figure out how I'm going to escape out a window or somehow manage to get her to leave

it all just seems like unnecessary work
just to ultimately lower the quality of
my life I don't think it's that
depression I don't feel depressed have I
become a narcissist or should I just let
things drop away naturally seems like a
fairly Buddhist issue there is a certain
amount of what I think is healthy fear
surrounding the issue for me I
appreciate any input
well what he's describing is actually
praised in the poly texts that there's a
certain succession or sequence and I
didn't look this up in the in the poly
dictionary maybe I should have but
relying upon my not entirely Perfect
Memory I'm pretty sure that it's nibida

leads to wiraga which leads to emuti and
nibida sometimes it's translated as
disgust but it's more like
disillusionment or disenchantment it's
just like being just fed up with the
world and being fed up with the world
leads to iraga or dispassion you know
it's just your your unskillful passions
and lusts and so forth just die out
because of this this nibita and when
your passions die out with through uraga
it goes to emuti which is Liberation
it's enlightenment
so in a way I mean Buddhism would
actually say that this is
um it's more good than bad I mean

there's no doubt some bad mixed in
because you don't just have pure good or
pure bad in Buddhist philosophy there's
always it's always a shade of gray
but um
yeah and also the wisudi Maga for what
it's worth it's the the main
commentarial text in terrible Buddhism
it says that people with a dose of
personality you know there's there's six
different personality types I won't go
into all these lopa Dosa and Mohawk the
three poisons plus they're opposites
those are like the three main person of
the six main personality types and
someone with a personality type
oh man just a second

I keep forgetting to plug in the
computer

okay

someone with the kind of aversive dose
of personality type uh is actually in
some cases at least more able to become
enlightened just because they have less
attachment for some sorrow I know

they're not satisfied by samsara and I'm
not saying that uh Stevens here has the
uh dose of temperament

but uh it's the same kind of principle
where just

not liking the world or not liking
samsara not liking life in general is
actually a pretty good foundation for

dhamma practice that will just liberate
you and I mean you're already taking
steps to detach yourself from the world
even if it's it's not fully conscious
you know it's just sort of like a
personality thing or a subconscious
thing but still it's it's happening
anyway and so you're already becoming
detached from samsara and so Dharma
practice would probably be more
effective in that case and uh you seem
to be making some kind of progress even
if that wasn't your deliberate conscious
intention
so we'll just move on to the next
question here this is the Arya sawasti
project

and the Arya sawasti project says since suffering is the distinguishing characteristic of unenlightenment would you say that any happiness contentment or satisfaction is a step to Enlightenment even if a temporary one shouldn't we avoid misery at all costs and being that happiness contentment and satisfaction are states of mind and these are not in Ibana is there suffering or misery in the higher Realms under nibana warm regards

okay so this is sort of like a two-point two-part question at least

um

first part is is any kind of Happiness a

step to Enlightenment not necessarily I mean anything that happens to you is a baby step to Enlightenment because you're you're like paying off some past comma but the thing is we just keep making new comma to replace the old comma that that is exhausted and so that doesn't work so much I mean I wouldn't say that like the Euphoria of being high on heroin or any kind of Narcotics would get you closer to Enlightenment I mean to some degree maybe you might have get some kind of insight into the Timeless nature of Enlightenment or something but I mean positive and negative have to balance out that's that's one of those beliefs I've had

intuitively pretty much my entire life
and so some kinds of of Happiness like
positive pleasure or positive Joy
um they tend to balance out in the long
run

so like a monk is just going for
neutrality he's going for Equanimity you
know he's not trying to be elated by
good things or depressed by bad things
not no dejection no Elation just just
taking you know just the the straight
and narrow flat course of neutrality
so yeah I mean happiness at like the
worldly level you know positive
happiness negative unhappiness it's all
just ups and downs of some sorrow it's

like the roller coaster ride

so it's not necessarily a step to

Enlightenment it's uh

I mean happiness and unhappiness kind of

they kind of go together so so long as

you're on the roller coaster ride it's

it's less likely that you're going to be

getting close to Enlightenment I mean

it's still theoretically possible I

think

but

um it's much less likely than if you go

for Stillness and silence and neutrality

so let's see shouldn't we avoid misery

at all costs

um I mean it does make sense unless

you're trying to deal with the misery

like face it like you're trying to cure
yourself let's say you're you got you're
deathly afraid of spiders right so you
you like try to expose yourself to
spiders and even though you're just
feeling this dread in your heart you
know you're just terrified still you're
forcing yourself to learn how to deal
with the spider with Equanimity then
that is not necessarily bad I mean that
would be skillful I mean especially if
you're successful at that

um then you had like the James and the
ajivakas in the Buddhist time who were
literally torturing themselves

um the Buddha was saying I mean you

shouldn't do that and then the middle path of Buddhism is avoiding self-indulgence you know seeking out pleasure on the one hand and self-torture or seeking out pain on the other you know you just live a simple peaceful life and the world's gonna throw you both I mean it's gonna be throwing happiness or you know Pleasant and unpleasant at you and what you're supposed to try and do is again not be elated by the pleasure and not be dejected by the displeasure and just try to maintain Equanimity as well as you can and if you can't maintain equality like you're experiencing the Elation or the dejection You observe it mindfully

you know you observe it as though you're
an ichthyologist observing a dead fish
specimen

specimen

so

yeah okay I think I answered that part
so then I'll I'll move on to this next
part here I think

and being the happiness contentment and
satisfaction or states of mind and these
are not nibana is there suffering or
misery in the higher Realms under nibana
um in the higher Realms underneath like
heaven realms there's not super misery I
mean there's a certain sadness like
um it says in the text like you've got a

Deva in tawatimsa heaven and there's no old age there's no sickness there but still after uh a Deva you know a small G god or goddess has been there for you know umpteen million years all of a sudden they're they're like glorious Brilliance starts to fade and then everyone knows they're going to pass away from there and so then they they come and you know they're like sad goodbyes and so forth because even though there's no sickness or old age still they're going to disappear soon and reappear in some of the realm that they probably don't know what it's going to be

um so there's not like real misery but

there's a certain boredom I assume

uh

uh this and and I mean everything is

duka I mean even the highest realm I

mean you can't even say baloney like the

highest realm in samsara of the 31

planes of existence is still duka I mean

it's

um

it's not entirely satisfactory and I've

I've hypothesized

that a certain dissatisfaction is

necessary just to drive us on from one

moment to the next you know if any

moment was completely satisfactory we

might just stop in the state of bliss

and just stop progressing through time
or something

because I do think time is is

psychological More Than Physical

so yeah even in the highest Realms it's

much more subtle the happiness and the

unhappiness are much more subtle but

they're still there it's all duka you

know anywhere you know the first Noble

Truth applies to the highest Heaven

Realms as well as here as well as you

know the lowest lower realms

that nothing is entirely satisfactory

there's always going to be this kind of

a

a nagging dissatisfaction that just

keeps pushing you I mean in uh in the

atticawaga it's referred to as like a Barb or a spike in the heart that you can't just sit still I mean you just have to it's like it's urging you on constantly it's this dissatisfaction there's another suto where the Buddha is describing the average person to a dog with mange where the dog lies down in this place and it can't be comfortable so then it gets up and lies down in some other place and it can't be comfortable and it scratches itself which maybe helps a little bit but then it it doesn't help so then it goes and lies down somewhere else and that's kind of the way the average person is it's like

if we're just driven by dissatisfaction
nothing is entirely satisfactory yeah at
the very least we want more of it
so

yeah I think I answered that so I think
I'll just move on to the next question

here this is from live laugh leave

and live laugh leave says I wanted to
ask if you have anything to say on the
matter of narcissism

would Buddhism and Buddhist practices be
able to cure a narcissist well

theoretically yeah

um theoretically you know if you're
doing serious like introspection and
doing serious meditation and uh just
serious renunciation and

um we've like uh like you know isolation
you're isolating yourself you're you're
living a pure simple quiet life
um yeah I mean if you get insights
through meditation then yeah definitely
you could you could uh
you could cure your own narcissism but
unfortunately probably most narcissists
who practice Buddhism don't get cured
because it's just a law of human nature
that you're going to work on the stuff
you're already good at like with regard
to ascetic practices a monk who is
really addicted to sleep but he's
already gotten Detachment from food
he'll do the food to tongas you know

he'll only eat once a day and just eat
whatever is given to him and so forth
but still he's gonna sleep too much
whereas another Monk who doesn't he's
detached from sleep but
um he really likes his food he might
sleep in a sitting position all the time
and sleep four hours per night or
whatever but he's really going to enjoy
his food still so it's I mean if you
have like a really wise teacher I guess
ajan child was like this where he could
see what your attachments were and he'd
make you face your attachments like if
you were really gregarious and didn't
like being alone he'd send you off into
a forest and if you just really wanted

to be alone he'd send you to a monastery
in town if you're afraid of ghosts he'd
send you to a cemetery that kind of
stuff and um like if a narcissist really
that was one of these kind of teachers
who really made him like face his issues
or if you just have this streak of
wisdom you know you've got like a
certain maturity where you're able to
just make yourself face your issues
um I don't know whether a narcissist
would want to do that or not I don't
know whether a narcissist would want to
cure himself of his own self-love I'm
not sure
but uh I think a narcissist if he did

meet one of these these teachers he'd probably just like leave and discuss and think that he was clueless or something I mean the the narcissist would think that the the teacher was clueless just because

um it wasn't feeding his narcissism or some such but potentially at least if you practice dhamma correctly and conscientiously and wisely then yeah it can cure all kinds of things

so I'll just uh move on to the next question and this oh boy all of a sudden it's just this is the last question the very last question it just takes me by surprise sometimes and this is by Nathan

and Nathan says why did you choose to train in Burma rather than the Thai Forest tradition I am currently reading the ajan cha biography called Stillness flowing and his values seem to align more with yours than what I know about Burma

the ajan was very strict on winnia but relatively free in his interpretations of lesothos and commentaries yeah that is true that uh the Burmese they uh they have a lot of emphasis on meditation and abhidham for some reason whereas the ties have much more emphasis on this monastic discipline but the thing is first of all when I was

first ordained as a monk I was just
looking through a directory of Buddhist
organizations in America
and there was this this one I was there
was this one thing this one entry called
Tom pulus it wasn't even spelled
correctly I mean if it was spelled
correctly it'd be Tong pool to Seattle
they put this extra p in there for some
reason they didn't know what it was I
didn't know what it was I thought maybe
it was bhutanese or something but
um it wasn't obviously not a monastery
so I wrote to them and it turned out to
be a Burmese Buddhist Monastery and at
the time
um there were no good Thai Forest

monasteries in America and I wanted to be a monk in America at first my my idea was I didn't want to be distracted by Visa issues having to learn another foreign language besides poly you know I just I just wanted to stay in America be a monk I could do more good with you know promulgating dhamma in America at least through example and so it was just largely through karmic random chance that uh I wound up at a Burmese Monastery in America which at the time was probably one of the best uh monasteries in America although I don't think it is anymore anywhere close to being the best

um but another thing with regard to the Thai tradition versus Burmese tradition which I think I was lucky is that the Thai tradition is much more Conformity oriented you have to follow along with what everyone else is doing whereas in Burma there's more leeway in that regard so

I think that that was helpful to me because I had my own ideas with regard to like wearing monks robes I was just like like I said before I was just radically strict and so I would read the the rules I've been asking this one and see that almost no monk in the world is wearing a robe that is according in accordance with the rules

so I was wearing these little robes and kind of wearing it kind of like a shawl which was pretty obviously what was intended in ancient times when they made the rules about robes and in Thailand especially that's just not an option you have I mean you'd be sticking out like a sore thumb you gotta do what everyone else is doing you got to look like whatever the way everyone else looks like I mean there's probably exceptions to that but the ajanta tradition is very Conformity oriented um and Thai tradition in general is very Conformity oriented and I'm just not a conformist I was going to follow my own

conscience follow the texts as well as I
could and I really didn't give a damn
what the people around me were doing
as a general rule
so that's why uh first of all it was
just

um the the only Terra Vada Buddhist
Monastery that wrote back to me that I
even knew of was a Burmese place and I
wound up eventually ordaining there and
stayed in America as a monk for over a
year before finally going to Burma
um and also the Thai tradition is is
just too Conformity oriented for my
tastes
and that's it I answered all the
questions

by golly

and if you have any more questions

um just feel free to leave them in the

comments below and don't forget to uh

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