The Insight Chorus - Part 2 - Independence

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Last night we started on the insight chorus of the Satipatthana Sutta and we got through three sentences and tonight we'll do the fourth.

So what we did last night, the Buddha says, in this way she lives tracking body as body internally or she lives tracking body as body externally, or she lives tracking body as body both internally and externally. So here we see the weakening of the basic self-other division.

She lives tracking the nature of arising as body or she lives tracking the nature of ceasing as body or she lives tracking both the nature of arising and the nature of ceasing as body. So this is the perception of impermanence. And of course along with that comes perception of dukkha and of not-self. So the development of insight.

Further, her mindfulness, there is body, is established just for understanding, just for continuous mindfulness. So then you get a clear, direct intimacy with the experience which is continued over time.

And then the final sentence, and she lives independently, not clinging to anything in the world. So this is what we're looking at tonight. And this final sentence, she lives independently, not clinging to anything in the world, indicates the maturity of the practice and the maturity of the realization of the awakening itself. And you notice again, it's about a way of life. She lives independently. So this is not just about some kind of meditation experience. This is a whole way of life. And the not clinging indicates the sense that there's nothing further to be gained from anything really.

So let's have a look at what this idea of independence involves by looking at what happens before independence. And there are two major conditioning factors. The first is desire.

Why do we practice? Why do we take up any kind of meditation practice in the first place? Well of course it's because we want something. In other words, we are not satisfied with what we have now. We're not satisfied with this current situation. We want something better. Otherwise, we wouldn't bother. So we make effort because desire is the basis of effort. This is something that the Buddha is quite clear about.

Now, the way this works out is what we've talked about before, that our relationship to any experience, but you can certainly see it in the course of the meditation practice, is dominated by a sense of what's in this for me? What can I get out of this? And what's underneath that is a sense of things are not good enough yet. So we have an instrumental relationship to experience. We're constantly trying to massage it and manipulate it to make it suitable for our purposes. And there's always a gap. There's always something missing. There's always something more we need to do. And this is a relationship to the

practice and to life that's dominated by what the Buddha calls tanha and avijja. Tanha is usually translated craving, literally it means thirst, and avijja is ignorance or delusion.

Along with desire, of course, there's also time. When experience is dominated by a sense of something to be gained or something to be lost, then time becomes real. We find ourselves resisting what's happening now because we're convinced that what will happen later is going to be more important or what did happen before was more important so we don't fully commit to the present because what's happening now is just a prelude to something more important that will happen later when I finally get what I want. And this means that what's happening now can be dismissed. If I've judged it as not good enough, then I can just forget about it. I'll just forget about it today and start again tomorrow. Have you ever thought that?

But when we are entirely intimate, then this experience now, whatever it is, is already enough. There's nothing more to gain, and there's no thought of anything that's going to come later, or even anything that did happen before. Any felt sense of past and future dissolves.

Now this doesn't mean that we don't think of past and future but in the very act of thinking about past and future it's perfectly clear that this is just a thought and it arises now. And there's the world of difference between a thought about the past or the future that arises now and being lost in the fantasy of past and future. And when that perception develops even any concept of the present dissolves.

And at this point there's no possibility of wanting anything else because there's no sense that anything alternative to this is even possible. It's just ridiculous.

Now here we're getting into the area that the Buddha calls, in this context, independence—in Pali, anissita.

So let's get a sense of independence by first looking at what the Buddha means by dependence, which is nissita. Nissita means dependent on, attached to, supported by.

This again comes out of the Buddha's fundamental assumption, his fundamental framework of dependent arising. This states that whatever we experience arises because of conditions other than itself. So if something is happening—which it is—there must be something else which conditioned it to arise. Otherwise it wouldn't be here. So this, which is happening now, is dependent upon, supported by, these other conditions. Take away the conditions, this collapses.

You might be having a satisfactory meditation and you might be convinced that finally you've got it. This is it. Now I know exactly how this practice works. There's no problem whatsoever. I've conquered it. And just at that moment, the door swings open very noisily and a guy in boots walks in and says, "I've got to look at the heater. Could you move?" And suddenly it all collapses. Because the conditions that supported it have just vanished. And with that, the experience vanishes.

This lesson is useful, especially for experienced practitioners. People, as their practice develops, might go

through very difficult emotional situations where what we could call trauma arises in the heart, in the mind. It completely knocks us out and we stagger up a couple of days later and continue the retreat. We seem to get over that. Years go by, that's gone, and we think, "Phew, cleared that one out. I'm over that." And then suddenly—bang—it's back again. Haven't seen this for five years, ten years, fifteen years, and bang, it's back again, just like it was.

It's easy to think, "Oh, I haven't really made any progress," or "My sense of progress is an illusion." Well, it is, insofar as I think it's mine, but basically it's just conditions. If the conditions are such, the problem does not arise. But if the conditions are something else, it arises. It's actually got nothing to do with me. It's just conditions. That's all.

So this is the Buddha's basic framework—dependent arising. The reality of something, of an experience, is inseparable from the reality of what supports it.

For example, one area of experience that the Buddha is very interested in is my sense of self. I think I am real. In fact I'm pretty much convinced I'm real. Certainly sitting up here I feel real. Now I think I'm real in part because you think that I'm real. At least you treat me as if you think I'm real. So I think I'm the teacher here. I'm just quietly minding my own business up in the sunroom and people come in one after the other and they want to talk about their meditation practice. So I must be the teacher.

"Imposter."

Exactly, but don't tell anyone.

There's a friend of mine who lived in Japan. He said he knew someone—this woman who was another foreigner living in Japan—who would work in these Japanese companies, and she was very successful. But she'd work two or three years and then quit, and then join some other company, work two or three years and quit, and join some other company. She'd go through this pattern. About two years she would last. And once he asked her, "Why do you do that? Why do you quit every couple of years?"

I mean, it just causes trouble for you. And she says, "As time goes on, I get increasingly agitated and worried that sooner or later they're going to find out that I'm faking it. So I quit before they can."

And his comment on this was: she had a good realization into anattā, but the problem was it didn't go far enough. She didn't realize that everyone is faking it. So yeah, we're all faking it.

I think I'm real in part because you think I'm real. There's an external social support for the self. Also internally, my thoughts about myself. Each day I get up and I think about myself—who I am, how I got here, how it's going, how it might go in the future. And the drama of my life flows through my mind. This drama seems real, and the emotions associated with this drama seem real, so I must be real.

Then there's the whole thing about possessions. This nice classy Korean jacket—this seems real. And it's mine. So if this is real, and it's mine, then I must be real. This body seems real, and this is mine, so I must

be real.

I'm caught up in this network, this incredibly complex network of experienced events that together create the sense of the reality of me living in this world. And all of those events are dependent upon, supported by something else. Without those supports, it would not be here. And therefore this sense that here I am in this world would not be here. So it's entirely dependent.

Does that make sense? So that's dependence. The opposite is independence—anissita.

Now how does the Buddha speak of that? In one discourse, the simile of the snake, he speaks of the citta, the heart-mind, of a tathāgata. And tathāgata—we talked about this maybe yesterday—is an awakened one. One who is in the state of gone to, come from: gata, tathā, just—just come, just gone, just is.

What is the state of the citta, the heart-mind, of an awakened one? The Buddha says: "When the devas, including Indra, Brahma and Pajāpati, seek a practitioner whose heart-mind is liberated in this way, they cannot get hold of anything that a Tathāgata's awareness depends upon. Why? Because a Tathāgata is untraceable right here and now."

So here he's talking about the citta, the heart-mind, rather than the body. The devas including Indra, Brahma and Pajāpati—these are seriously senior brahma devas. And devas have much more refined and powerful perceptions than human beings. They can perceive things that we cannot.

Now, they look for an awakened one. They've heard a rumor that there's an awakened one in the human realm. And so they go searching. And they cannot find the citta of the awakened one. They can find a body that's walking around, but they can't find the citta that animates this body.

Remember all those stories about Māra who comes and bothers the Buddha and other awakened ones? I think the reason why he did that was because he was really edgy and agitated because he couldn't find this person. There's the body, but where's the citta? I think it really bugged him.

They can't find it because such a citta is untraceable right here and now—because they cannot get hold of anything that the awareness of such a person depends on, is supported by. There's nothing that it depends on. There's nothing that supports it. So it can't be found. It can't be grasped.

I cannot grasp my sense of myself in the absence of those things that support it. But what if there's nothing that supports it? Then how can I get hold of this self? I can't.

One way of looking at this is that ultimately what it all comes down to are concepts. I think I am real. I believe I am real. I perceive myself to be real because I perceive this to be real, which supports me. I think this is real, which supports me.

So it all comes down to concepts.

And concepts involve language in the deep sense of how we name ourselves and our world. The meaning

we give something, or the meaning that we give to something. So we trace ourselves and others through concepts, through labels, through language, through names.

But what the Buddha is suggesting is that an awakened citta, an awakened heart-mind, cannot be captured by any kind of language or concept or description. There's nothing we can get hold of to pin it down as something, as anything.

In the Atthiragasutta, the Buddha uses an image which I really am very fond of. He says: a roofed building or hall has windows to the north, the south and the east. When light enters a window at sunrise, where would it land?

So that's the question that he gives to the students. And of course, you all know the answer because it's pretty obvious.

"On the west wall, Bhante."

So the sun rises in the east. There's a roofed building or hall. It's got windows to the north, the south, the east. Light enters the window at the east. Where does it land? On the west wall.

"If there was no west wall, where would it land?"

"On earth, Bhante."

"If there was no earth, where would it land?"

"On water, Bhante."

This is ancient Indian cosmology. You have the great earth which is supported by the great ocean.

"If there was no water, where would it land?"

"It would not land, Bhante."

So "not landed" awareness is apatitita vijnana. And it's compared to light that doesn't land anywhere.

Now, in English we have a saying: "to see the light." But we actually don't see light. What we see is what light illuminates, what it lands on. So we gave the image of awareness is like light. I step into a dark room, switch on the light, and the room is illuminated. We don't see the light, we see the room. But the fact that we see the room means there is light. So the light lands upon the people, the furniture, the walls, and so we see what's going on.

What would we see if the light did not land anywhere? What would be available? That we have the light, the awareness, but it doesn't actually land anywhere at all. What can we say about such a situation? Does the light exist? Does the light not exist? Or does any kind of concept that we create about it fail? And if concept fails, what's left?

Now this term, "unlanded," is apatititta, and the same term turns up in Sanskrit as apratiṣṭha. And it's found as a technical term in the Mahayana. So it turns up in the Diamond Sutra, which is a key text for the Mahayana. Here it's translated as "unsupported."

The Buddha there says: "Therefore, Subhuti, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva should give rise to an unsupported heart. A heart not supported anywhere. A heart unsupported by sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles or phenomena."

So the purpose of the practice for a bodhisattva, someone practicing the Mahayana, is to give rise to a citta which is not supported anywhere. Not supported by anything. Nothing in the six senses supports this heart-mind.

That's from the Sanskrit version of the sutra. In the Chinese version the same phrase is translated as "dwell nowhere and bring forth that mind."

So this is the "nowhere" that one is supposed to dwell.

Dwell nowhere and bring forth that mind. So live from that place of nowhere. And this phrase is very famous in the Zen tradition because when the young man who became the sixth ancestor, Huineng, was coming home to the village one day carrying firewood—since he made a living collecting firewood—there was a monk in the marketplace chanting the Diamond Sutra. When Huineng heard that phrase, bang, he got his first enlightenment experience, dropped his wood and headed off to the monastery.

So this is the unlanded awareness or the unsupported heart. This is something that is real, that exists, but it cannot be described. It cannot be captured by any concept.

Think about how description or concept works. I've got something, let's call it X, and I want to describe it. And so I do so eloquently, poetically, clearly. What I have is a network of concepts. What I don't have is X.

You might go home having done a meditation retreat and somebody asks you, "So what have you been doing for the past month?" And you might describe it very clearly. Would they know from that what you had done for the past month? No. That's why it's best to say things like, "Well, nothing much. Sat around. Did as little as possible, but it was hard. Went for a walk."

No explanation, no concept can capture the actual lived experience of anything. Similarly, the citta, the heart-mind of the liberated one exists—that is, there really is liberation—but it cannot be pinned down by any kind of concept. To recognize that, to actually live that, is the goal. To come out of that emptiness. How one lives that is the subject of much of the Zen literature. Of course, they play with this endlessly.

The koan I like to use to illustrate this is Case 40 of the Gateless Barrier, concerning a monk called Kuishan who was a disciple of Baizhang. Baizhang was one of the great early Chinese Chan teachers, and Kuishan was one of his disciples.

When Kuishan was with Baizhang's assembly, he was cook of the monastery. Now a cook in a monastery is a very responsible and very senior position. Don't imagine the cook is low down in the hierarchy. The cook is way up in the hierarchy. Otherwise they wouldn't be given such a job.

Baizhang wanted to choose a founding teacher for Mount Dagui. There's a nearby mountain suitable for a monastery, and Baizhang has been invited to create a new monastery. But he needs a teacher there—someone who will go there, basically camp out, attract disciples, attract money, build a monastery and spread the Dharma. He invited all his monks to make a presentation, saying, "The outstanding one will be sent." So this is an interview, a job interview essentially. An audition, a job interview. He's got to pick his best disciple for this job.

So he's going to be as fair as possible. He gets everyone together in the community and says, "Right, now we're going to pick the outstanding one among you." He took a water bottle, put it on the floor and said, "Don't call this a water bottle. What would you call it?" And he sits back and waits.

Imagine you're sitting there and there's this water bottle and you're thinking, "Okay, don't call it a water bottle. What do you call it?" Hmm.

Now, the top of the hierarchy is the head monk. The head monk runs the place for the teacher. He's second in command and obviously wants this promotion. He doesn't want to spend all his life playing second fiddle to the great guru.

He wants his own place. So he decides he's got to say something.

"It cannot be called a shoe," he declares.

Now generally at this point, if you're studying these stories, the Zen student sneers contemptuously at such a ridiculous presentation. But they're already primed to do that because usually the head monk in these stories plays the role of the idiot. But it's actually not a bad presentation.

What's the head monk pointing out? He's saying, "Okay, don't call it a water bottle. Fine. Obviously you don't call it a water bottle because you cannot capture this with concept. But you've got to be careful with concept. You can't just do anything with them. They have power. They can be dangerous or they can be useful. So you've got to be careful in terms of the way you use them. If you're teaching the Dharma, it's concepts, and you've got to be careful about what you say. You cannot call this a shoe, so you can't mess concepts up. Otherwise you create a mess, especially if you're going to be a Dharma teacher."

But Pai Chang was obviously not sufficiently impressed. So Pai Chang then asked Kuishan his opinion.

Now Kuishan is sitting there. Does he know that this is an audition? Does he know that this is a job interview? Does he not know? Is that why he's silent? Or is he silent because he knows that it is? At any event, he's called out. "Okay, your turn."

Kuishan kicked over the water bottle and walked out.

Pai Chang laughed and said, "The head monk loses."

Kuishan thereupon was made the founding teacher at Mount Guishan.

So—kicking over the water bottle and walking out. What was that all about? It's easy to read this as Zen anti-intellectual nonsense, kind of lawlessness, or do whatever you like. But it's much more than that.

Remember Kuishan's job. He was the cook. Now, it's a hungry community, and here everyone's been gathered for this really important meeting. There's no one in the kitchen. But who's responsible for making sure that the next meal arrives on time? Kuishan. He can't fob it off on the kitchen staff—they're all at the assembly. Frankly, he hasn't got time for this bullshit. There are things to be done. So let's cut through the crap and do it. Kick the water bottle over, go back to the kitchen, make lunch.

And I think that's why Pai Chang laughed, apart from the fact that it was funny and made him laugh. What Kuishan was doing was just doing what needed to be done in the most simple, direct fashion. Just do it. And that's exactly the kind of person Pai Chang was looking for. And in fact, Kuishan did do it. He was sent off to the mountain and eventually developed a big monastery.

So this is one way that the Zen tradition plays with this sense of the unsupported heart, the unlanded awareness—but then how do you live from that? Beyond concept, not tied down by concept. Not the back story, but the forward story.

When Kuishan went to the mountain, it was apparently a very nice mountain, a very nice mountain with a flat area on top, perfect for a monastery. And Kuishan built himself a little hut and started meditating and waited for other people to turn up. And he waited. And he waited. And nobody turned up.

And eventually he thought, "No one's coming. It's a complete waste of my time." So he decided to leave.

He was walking down the path when suddenly he met a tiger. The tiger looked at him and growled. Kuaishan looked at the tiger and thought, "Hmm." He walked back to the top and returned to his hut, thinking, "Maybe I'm not leaving."

Not long after that, people started to turn up. It's an interesting story because the tiger is the spirit of the mountain. If you go to Korea—I don't know if it's like this in Japan—every monastery has a little shrine to the mountain spirit. The mountain spirit is invariably this old man with a long white beard, accompanied by a tiger. It's the tiger spirit of the mountain. So the spirit wouldn't let him go.

Part of the significance of this story, like many Zen stories, is that no description works. Performance works. Action works. But no description is adequate. These words about living independently, not clinging to anything in the world, are trying to convey something that cannot be described—something that can only be lived.

So it's futile to try to give a description. Perhaps a more useful project is to ask: How do we practice independence, rather than try to describe independence? How do we practice it?

The short answer is by not clinging to anything in the world. But if we're going to practice that, how would we go about doing it?

I think there are two fundamental movements. The first is to uncover our clinging—to uncover the point where we cling. Now, if we ask where we cling, the answer could be obvious. We all have problems, things we're stuck on. But it can also be very subtle. Sometimes the deepest clinging, the habitual clinging, we never see precisely because it's so habitual. Yet this is what pulls our strings.

Somebody said, "What makes a puppet a puppet? It's the fact that the puppet doesn't know that he's a puppet." That's the perfect puppet. We're driven by our clinging, and our deepest clinging we don't even know, because it's buried so deep. So the first thing is to uncover it.

One way to begin looking for it is by investigating our distractions. What prevents me—what prevents the citta from settling? What's getting in the way? Superficially we could say our distractions, but what that means is our clinging. The mind, the heart, is grasping, holding on to something. That holding is what gets in the way of everything settling down.

If the clinging is underneath the surface of consciousness, I don't see it, but it dominates and colors the felt situation. It's like wearing colored glasses—everything appears different. If I wear the colored glasses all the time, at some point I don't even notice that they're colored. I just assume this is the way the world is.

What we do when we practice is uncover our clinging. This involves ever-increasing intimacy, going deeper and deeper into the citta. When we find it, what do we do? Basically, we relax. And then, hopefully, we let go. The job is to let go of the clinging.

This is one of the reasons why the body work is so fascinating—because we can see this whole process in the body where it's much more obvious than in the citta, but the process is exactly the same.

In those stretches, find where it's tight. Find where the body in this movement refuses to go any further. That is the point of clinging. The mind is clinging to the perception that it's impossible to go further. Find that point and then relax. When the conditions are right, it gives way, and we go a bit further. There is a felt letting go.

So find where the holding is, rest the awareness on it, relax, let go. In the body work, we get a physically felt sense of that—of what the body feels like when we do it. This helps us feel it in the citta, where it's much more subtle, but it's exactly the same process. Find the point at which there's a holding, the point that we cannot get beyond. Find it. Rest the awareness on it. Relax. Then at some point when the conditions are right, we let go.

When we let go, when we begin to inhabit the world of non-clinging, how does this world function? We're

still in the same world that we are when we're clinging. There's still seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, minding. So we are in a world of experience, but we are no longer in a world of named experience. That's the difference. No concept works, and so the mind cannot pin down this experience of not clinging as anything at all. This is what makes it so subtle.

Later we might look back and name it: "Ah yes, that was not clinging." But having named it, that name, that label has already missed the labeled. It's impossible to jump over this gap between the actuality and the name we put on it. That gap is always there.

So ordinary life goes on. We see, we hear, we think, smell, taste, touch. But we learn to recognize that while our seeing, hearing, thinking, smelling, tasting, touching are real, what we see, hear, think is not what we think it is. This whole process of experiencing is real, but what I think I experience is not.

Our perceptions and our judgments of what we are sensing are wrong. All of them. They may be useful because they get us through the day skillfully, but they are wrong.

If all these perceptions and judgments are wrong, what's right? As soon as we reach out to put a label on something, to name it as something, to say "this is what's right," as soon as we do that we are clinging, and what we're clinging to is certainty. Only concept gives that certainty. As soon as we cling, then we're stuck and we're in pain.

But when we recognize that our label does not match, that the concept is wrong, then it's possible to relax back into that gap, that space of uncertainty. But to relax into it.

Normally our response to uncertainty is to tighten, freeze, cling, because we don't like it—it's uncomfortable. Not knowing is not comfortable. So we freeze and create a concept that we can hold on to: "Ah, this is what's going on."

But if we can relax into the uncertainty, it's a whole different experience. The gap between the concept and the reality stimulates our curiosity. "I don't know—then what is it after all?" So the investigation arises.

I walk into a situation that, conceptually, I've encountered dozens, even hundreds of times before. Because of that familiarity, I fall asleep. I know what it is, so there's no need to stay awake. But when I walk into that same situation knowing that I don't actually know what it is, then I'm awake, interested, and curious.

What arises is what the Buddha calls sati sampajanya—mindfulness and clear understanding. When we think we know, we fall back into habit. And when we are in habit, we are in our state of habitual clinging, and we are asleep. We don't know what's going on. We think we do, but we don't.

This is why I like to tell people that what gets in the way of meditation practice is not distraction. Distraction is the content of the practice. The barrier to practice—even the enemy of practice—is habit. When we fall into habit, we're asleep. We fall into habit precisely at the points where we think we know

what is going on.

But when we genuinely don't know what happens next—and this is quite clear as a felt sense of genuinely not knowing what's happening next—then we're awake, alert, curious, and interested. Then we are truly doing this practice.

So that brings us to the final sentence: "And she lives independently, not clinging to anything in the world." In terms of how one lives, this is the goal of the practice.

Any questions or comments? Does any of that make sense?

"Can I just ask a question about the previous three sentences? The significance of 'or'?"

Ah, yes. With these terms—I forget what it is in Pali—it's like a verbal tic. It's just a way of saying, "OK, then there's this, and then there's this, and then there's this." It's a way to signal that this is the next item, and this is the next. I can't think of an English equivalent. I haven't gone into this deeply, but I think it's just an indication—"okay, then comes this."

"It just struck me tonight when you read it again, that it's saying 'this or this,' so I sort of heard it as more like you could just focus on internal sensation and reach the goal, not have to do any of the others because of the 'or.'"

I think the part about dependent arising is that there's a sense in which reality is modular. Once you're intimate with one aspect of it, all the others will turn up. It's like a multidimensional maze. Once we're in at one point of it, other parts will arise.

So let's say, for example, internal or external. I would say that for some people, their entry point would be the internal. But once they're in the internal, then everything else is revealed. But for other people, the entry point would be the external. Once they're in that, then everything else emerges. And so on.

So it's laid out in a very linear fashion, but I doubt that it is actually that linear. I think it's more dynamic than that. There's a sense in which the Buddha is laying out possibilities, and then the meditator discovers which one they're sensitive to.

You get a similar thing where sometimes he'll lay out lists of synonyms. There's one passage where he's talking about dukkha, and he says dukkha is a boil, a dart, a disease, a tumor, and on and on, listing about a dozen different descriptions. When I first read that, I thought, "God, this is tedious." But one time when I was doing intensive meditation practice and going through a lot of dukkha, I was reading it and going, "Yes, yes, no, no, yes, yes, yes, no, no, yes, yes, yes."

So it's about accessibility. It's presenting how different people experience it. Do you experience it this way? Then catch this one and go there. Some people come in this way, others that way.

I'm not quite sure about the technical answer to that question, but these are modular systems and they're

not as linear as they appear when laid out. But if you're going to say something, it has to be linear. You say one thing first, then another thing, then another thing.

So concepts have this linear structure, but the reality doesn't necessarily match the linearity of the structure.

Someone asked whether there was any significance to the "or" that was used in the first three sentences—the word "or." "She lives tracking body as body internally, or she lives tracking body as body externally, or she lives tracking body as body both internally and externally." So does this "or" mean you could do this or you could do that?

You do both of them. All of them. So what's the meaning of the "or"? Because in reality you're not really going to see arising without also seeing passing away. Although one of them could be emphasized at certain points, there are some flavors of impermanence where it's predominantly arising. But you don't see one aspect of the process and not other aspects.

We haven't seen the arising of that distraction—no, by definition we're there at the moment of its passing. So it can be that's a situation where it's just the passing and not the arising. And then you get in the classical insight knowledges you have udayabbaya ñana, knowledge of arising and ceasing, in which you see arising and ceasing. And then you have bhanga ñana, which is the knowledge of dissolution, where you just see the ending of things.

People have different experiences. One time here, in a summer retreat, one of the meditators was going through dukkha ñana. What was apparent was the universal characteristic of dukkha. She'd be walking from here to the house through the garden in summer when everything's blooming. She'd say partway through the journey, what she would see is everything beginning—everything blooming, life springing up out of the ground, everything new, everything fresh. And then suddenly everything dying, everything ceasing, everything falling to the ground and rotting. And then everything blooming. And it happens several times, just from here to the house. It's like one aspect of change, another aspect, another, another one. So you can get all sorts of particular views that may last briefly or they may last for a period of time.

Any other questions? Okay. Thank you very much.

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