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SPEAKERS

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So I want to continue on a topic that I've been talking about now for about a week in various places. And it's a topic which maybe some people like to hear about, and some people immediately would rather not hear about it. And to be patient. And so the topic is of bowing. And I brought it up about a week ago. And then last Monday, I talked about it and there was some interesting exchanges after the talk about it. That sent me thinking about Boeing quite a bit. And one of the interesting aspects of, I believe a spiritual life is to spend some time inquiring reflecting deeply about different themes and topics. And there are some themes and topics which and activities in spiritual circles, which are just kind of part part and parcel of the culture which we just kind of do without thinking and reflecting deeply about what we're doing and what it's all about. And, and so I took the opportunity this last week to reflect more deeply and try to learn more about this phenomena of Boeing. Since I was stimulated by the questions last Monday, I was told that there was more email exchange in our listserv around this topic and has ever been on any topic before said, right. So, apparently, it was interesting for some people, different camps about Boeing. And I'm very fond of Boeing, myself. One of the interesting questions in looking at this topic of Boeing is what is the connection between bowing and meditation, insight meditation? What's the connection with the Buddhist path of liberation, we all have this phenomenal potential of living a life that's at peace without conflict, inner outer conflict, phenomenal potential of being in the world with love and compassion and liberation and What is the connection between that capacity? and bowing? Is their connection? What is your relationship to Boeing? Any one of you? And probably if we kind of surveyed the room here, we'd get a quite a range of attitude towards Boeing. And that's fine. I think that Boeing has been, as far as I can tell, has been somewhat controversial. Probably much of the time that humans have been doing Boeing. There's a records of the Greeks complaining about the Persians back in ancient times, because the Persians would bow to the king. And the Greeks never bowed to any human being, they only bow to the gods. And, and then when Alexander the Great came along, he insisted people had to bow to him. And that was quite upsetting because you only bow to Gods that the only people worthy of bowing to you wouldn't bow to human being. So what is this about? So even, you know, over 2000 years ago, the Greeks were

struggling around this issue and bowing Who do you bow to And when Buddhism went to China, it was very controversial because one of the rules of traditional rules of Buddhist monks coming from India is that Buddhist monks don't bow to laypeople, including kings. And so, including the Emperor of China, and this was, you know, Chinese culture was built was built is built, I guess it was built in kind of hierarchical model, with the Emperor being the son of heaven, being kind of the top of the human pyramid, in a sense kind of mediating the world between humans and gods. And if you don't, the whole harmony of the cosmos is dependent on harmonious relationships in this hierarchy. Children to parents parents to I don't know what it is local lords and, you know, going up the hill going up to to the Emperor on top, and then these Buddhist monks came showed up on the scene in China. And they refused to bow to the Emperor. And this was outrageous. And how are they going to deal with this? And then you would come. Someone told us last Monday night, the story of the founding of the United States. And when they instituted the institution of presidency, the question was, do we bow to the President, as people bow to the King and Queen of England bow curtsy? And it was decided, apparently, that no, we would not bow to the president of United States. Because United States everybody's equal. And bowing is a sign of inequality, at least for the colonialists, people back in those times. And so they weren't gonna express that inequality, but they wanted to find some way to express equality. And one of the ways to do that is to shake hands with people equal in a sense, unless one person wants to show more superior superiority and they squeeze your hand harder. So,

and then you have a lot of people coming out of the Jewish faith, where they do bowing to any kind of icon or idol or God was very much against the grain of the religion. And so Jews who make a very big percentage of the Buddhist population in America will have a lot of trouble and say you're battling you know, bowing to the Buddha voluntary image. But it's not just us there's certain Protestants also have trouble with bowing, the Quakers my understanding that you know, that's like against their religion to bow, because everyone's equal everyone, everyone, every individual shares in the divine light. Kind of a certain Protestant, early Baptists kind of view that everyone everyone, each individual person is sacred. As the individual consciousness the individual choice is sacred and each person you and respect each person Want to see the Divinity in each person? And so you don't bow down to someone, because that's elevating them and lowering yourself in that model of bowing, which then is not appropriate. You find the idea of subservience as an aspect of bowing in different religions, certainly. And perhaps it's just human nature that if you want to show subservience to someone, you bow down, you get down on your knees, you get lower than them. The story I've sometimes told of, when I was about 20, this friend of mine was gonna, he was gonna duke it out with me, he was really angry with me, he was gonna fight. And he was walking across this field where I was working in the field, and it was obvious to me that he was about to and he was bigger and stronger than me. And, and the only thing I could I did kind of spontaneously without even thinking about it. I dropped down to my knees, or at least I think on one knee dropped down on one knee and put up my hands like this. I don't remember bowing down to him, but he's like this, you know, and I, you know, basically saying without words, gestures, some ways more powerful. I'm not going to fight. And I'm, you know, I'm helpless and you know, I'm not going to defend myself do what you wish, and here I am. And there's probably only thing that saved me. And he just turned away in disgust and walked away. And so, you

know, it's, you find very explicitly I think, in Islam, the idea that, you know, you bow down to Allah, you bow down all the way as they are, I think some notions in some areas of Islam is your slave to slave to God, you bow down, clearly submission to that which is higher. And, and that's certainly been part of the notion of bowing in many different cultures. The idea of you know, showing that you're, the person you're bound to is more respect for you than you are higher status than you are some ways you're more subservient to that person. So that's kind of notion about and then people have reacted to, as I've talked about already. It's interesting that the Buddha didn't bow to anybody after he was enlightened. So why is it the Buddha we didn't about anyone because he's so arrogant, so full of himself that he felt like he was so special and nobody else was worthy of bowing to. It Buddha also doesn't bow to Gods. There are a lot of pantheon of gods in ancient India, and the gods were about to the Buddha, but he would never about to the gods, there was nothing in the, in the, in the universe. That was the food the Buddha would bow to, except it said the Buddha would bound to the Dharma. Since there was no human being no God, there was of a higher status than him, the more realized more liberated than him. In certainly Indian cultures, in other words, these cultures was hierarchical in nature. And so you have in India, you know, a higher and lower status people and people of lower status will bow to the people of higher status, people higher status will generally not fall back. So, you know, a wife who's lower status, traditionally India would bow to her husband, and the husband wouldn't bow back, a student would bow to the teacher, a teacher wouldn't bow back, a lay person who about to a monastic but the monastic their spiritual teacher, a spiritual teacher wouldn't bow back. And so it goes you know, all the different categories you have to kind of it's kind of can be quite complicated keep track, you know, where you are in relationship to all these people and know whether you're supposed to bow or not. What often the person of higher status status does, in receiving that bow. They put their hands together and what's called in Sanskrit Anjali with gusto and Japanese Put your hands together like this, but you don't bow you might bow just ever so slightly, but but it's About subservience. So just you buy like this.

And then you get in Japanese culture where there's a lot of buying Japanese culture, also a somewhat harsh goal in nature. And, and they're, they have very complicated degrees of bowing, which you have to have to figure out if you're in the culture, do you, you know, you bout, you know, 10 degrees, 20 degrees, 30 degrees, you know, 45 degrees, 90 degrees, all depends on the status of the person you're buying. And then you have to kind of figure out, you know, you you about 30 degrees and they about 20 degrees, and if they've about 30 degrees and used about 40 degrees, they do 40 degrees up to 50 degrees, you know, used to kind of tune in to what's going on because you have to the social status or social relationships are being established in that Boeing. Interesting I learned this week and is that I hadn't when I was in Japan, I hadn't registered to me, but the Japanese person told me this. I think it's true and if any Japanese person here knows With a lot of bowing in Japanese culture, but the bowing is done with the hands on the side of their body. So like this. And the woman told me, you only bow with your hands together, when you go to a Buddhist temple or a commie shrine, and then you put your hands together, you bowing to the ancestors, you're bound to the Buddha. And so it's much more of a kind of spiritual activity go like this. Whereas, out in normal society, don't you don't put your hands together and bow, but just kind of value like this, which is kind of like the European way of

bowing. I grew up in Europe a little bit. And it was quite common for me as a kid to bow just was part of the culture that no one ever told me to do. I just kind of it's something I picked up not in Norway, where I grew up when I grew up in Italy. Maybe Norwegians don't? Well, I don't think so much because, you know, Norwegians, you know, the idea the notion of equality in England in there in America. democracies often been attributed to Greece. And some people argue that actually comes from Nordic influence on English culture, and was very strong in Viking times emphasis on equality and democracy, the oldest parliament in the world is in Iceland. And that strand of equality comes kind of through Anglo Saxon into America through that channel, I don't know. But when I grew up in Italy, there was a member stadia bowing, and even clicking your heels together was kind of something. And I've been told, you know, I kind of forget, if hadn't gone up there. I didn't notice that much. But it's been so long, I've been told that European shake hands a lot more than Americans to as much for that kind of contact, you know, meeting. So what are some shaking hands, I mean? So bowing. And then we have San Francisco Zen Center, which is where I practiced and learned about as a Buddhist, where there's a lot of bowing, bowing over and available all the time, and there's a lot of bowing to each other. And it occurred to me this week, that that's a continuation of the monastic practices of the temple life in Japan in the trading monastery and people bow to each other. And what's happened to San Francisco Zen Center, because it kind of taking the monastic training kind of model for how to bow. The students took it, that's how we that's kind of like the natural thing to do all the time. So we translate that outside the temple. And we're in Japan, they brought like this, outside the temple. They don't go like this. And unless maybe it's priests or monks meeting, they would do to each other. But we have all these lay people at times, because instead of practicing, and now they leave Zen center, living their lives outside of Zen center, and they bow to each other like this. They're quite happy to do it to do it. But it hasn't occurred to us that actually this is unusual in Japan. This is something you only do in the temple. So here you have the spreading of the spelling, putting your hands together and bowing. Spreading problem monastics situation out into society. You know, this is incent incentive incentive students. Often Americans and stuff and many of you, I noticed, I picked up the habit or the customer, whatever, of bowing at the end of the sitting, I mostly do it these days for a long time I didn't. I didn't want to set give the idea of sitting in the seat, I didn't want to give the idea to people who came here that you had to do what I did, so I didn't do it, then it would likely I like doing it. But I think that's primarily comes from Zen world that we do that I don't know, I don't know, I didn't notice in Southeast Asia, that people actually end up sitting with bow, they maybe get up from sitting and bow to the altar, before they left the shrine room. But the idea of bowing at the end like this, I think, you know, something we've learned from the Zen tradition. So there's this kind of, there's all these different ideas about bowing different cultural ideas, different religious ideas, different traditions, or kind of seeping into our relationship to bowing and, and depending on our particular relationship, then we have our own ideas and attitude towards value. I like to think of bowing as,

as a gesture. And as a gesture, it can express many different things. And so we can ask ourselves, you know, what, what are we expressing what do we want to express, if anything, when you put our hands together and bow down like this, some people bow further they are all the way down to the floor. And if you understand the reason for that, a lot of Americans probably wouldn't want to bow

down to the floor. And part of the reason is, is this idea of really putting yourself lower than the feet of the person you're bowing to, or the Buddha for example, putting stuff lower than the feet. Or sometimes you have to touch the feet of the guru, or the or the whoever's higher status than you. And in Zen when they brought to the floor, this thing about being lowered in the feet is quite explicit, because you're supposed to put your hand on either side of your ears lift up when you're when your forehead touches the floor. And the idea that I've been told is that your your, your, your lifting would have standing on your hands and you're kind of lifting the Buddha Because it's on your hands. Now, that seems to me innocent enough for us in the West. But in Indian and Thai in South Asian culture, the that the kind of purest part of a person's body is the head and the feet, there's one or more impure parts of a person's body. And by putting your feet, your head below their feet, right there at their feet, you're showing how subservient how much lower you are in status and respect worthiness than they are. Because you know, they're so pure that they can be higher than your feet than using your head. And isn't that amazing? So the idea of purity and impurity is a very big part of the status thing in these content cultures. And so Buddhism coming on India has these elements is incorporated in it to some degree, at least in the gestures it does. So, do we want to do that? Do we don't have the same notions of purity and impurity. If you go to Thailand, you don't want to touch someone's head. Like, you know, like, we might tear you know, like, nice hair, do you kind of go like this something or at the, because the head is the highest purest part of a person's body is tremendous leadership disrespectful to just touch their head, you know, you know, just it's, you know, don't don't do it. And, and Americans come there quite innocently and do it and don't know what they're doing. So there's all these cultural ideas. And we start investigating all this. And the question is, do we adopted all this, all of this? Does this mean that says Buddhism arose out of those cultures and in its paleontology, it's fossilized fossilization of different different customs of down through the ages, centuries, that if we don't like a particular thing, we just throw it reject Buddhism entirely. Do we? Or do we throw away the baby for the bathwater? Then, are there certain certain things that are maybe something give or take in Buddhism and things which, or do we have to take the whole thing as a whole I think to some degree Americans have or most people have picked and chosen the aspects of Buddhism that had most value for them, and those which don't fall away. One of the aspects that is most important, across borders in Buddhism is not bowing, but rather is a showing of respect. And that's common in all cultures, we show respect to each other. There's various ways of showing respect. We greet people respectfully, when they show up, we sometimes let people take go through the door before us We are a guest in their house, we show respect to maybe offering them tea. There's various ways of showing respect. There's a notion in Buddhism, that that if you want to receive the teachings, that you should show respect to the person giving the teachings or give respect to the teachings. And partly it's because maybe because the person has to exert themselves, it's exhausting to teach. And, and so you know, you'll be Expecting what it takes for someone to put out. parsley. But more think more deeply. I think that there's something happens in the heart when it showed respect to something where I think you're more, more ready to accept more guys to receive and reflect on the thing that you're teaching. If you he listened to teaching in a disrespectful way, I don't think you're really going to take in, in some deep place in your heart, what's being said, so you can reflect on in deep way and really kind of address it. So bowing is one of those ways of showing respect in some cultures. So that's one thing about it can

mean this gesture. Another thing that can mean is that as as we said, is that the person you're bowing to the thing you're bound to is of higher status than you and you're clearly showing that your lower status and you're elevating this thing, kind of a subservience. You're a servant of this, whatever. And other is simply an acknowledgement. acknowledgement of the person's greeting us time of greeting, you know, CU Hello, nice to see you.

Another thing is the expression of gratitude, you know, kind of Thank you beautiful expression, you know, thank you very much. Sometimes it's a kind of honoring my little bit more deeply then maybe connected to respect, but kind of a deep honor kind of expression of reverence for that what you're bowing to. So reverence what is reverence mean? What is the sense of awe perhaps a sense of, of what you're bowing to is sacred is quite beautiful to important awe inspiring. I know people who bow sometimes the great mountains, these huge, awesome mountains Wow. And vowing is a word of the body of the word gesture to become part of the human vocabulary. And in different cultures and different setting the word means different things. Do we reject it, vowing or do we appropriate it for our own expression? And I think it would be poor as people if we simply rejected bowing because you don't like some of the meanings in different cultures, different settings. But you but if we have something we want to express that feel has integrity to us. One of the avenues to do that is to bow. One of the reasons I bow at the end, for my hands like this and make small bow at the end of meditation is at the end of my meditation, I often have a feeling of something like gratitude and deep appreciation that I just want to give expression to, when certain things don't aren't giving expression to theirs. They're somehow it doesn't feel right, it feels like they're stultified or something. And so sometimes giving expression to something gives kind of liberated or freeze it or it makes it makes it flow through through us in a way that's very feels very good. And so I feel a sense of gratitude and appreciation when I hit the end of a city. But the interesting issue is that which may be a little bit a little bit bizarre is were asked myself what am i grateful for appreciative for? I'd actually not rather not asked to answer the question. It just feelings of gratitude. I don't feel like I can have feelings of gratitude without having an object of gratitude. So possible. So just, you know, just just to give give expression to that feeling.

So Buddhist monastics in the Theravada world that's one of the things that stimulated the question is when Jim Podolski asked me when Buddha when Theravada monks come to our center, and we bout to them they never bow back. Why is that? Well, they have a rule they're not allowed to, they're not allowed to pay homage to that goes through the list to a monk who is lower than them in status in seniority has been ordained less than less than them. shorter period of time. They're not allowed to pay homage Which includes bowing to a lay person into a woman. So lately, women also are lay women, but it also then implies nuns, they're not allowed to bow to none. And they're not allowed to bow to Unix. And they're not allowed to bow to various kinds of monks who might be more senior to them, but who may be on probation or need to be on probation. And this list of 10 different things, and And why is that? So I, I've asked one monk this week, you know, why is it that monastics don't buy a bow? And his answer was to lay people for example, and he said that first answer was, oh, monastics are outside of those social games. They're kind of they're kind of living outside of society. And they're

not living in society's rules. So you can imagine in ancient India, where the rules are very strict about bowing to each other, and status and all that they're stepping outside of the status game in ancient India, and maybe that's why the Buddha didn't belt anybody, because he was stepping outside of the status game. He wasn't playing that thing playing by those rules, people were brought to him. And we have stories in the sutra those people coming to see the Buddha. And some people would just say hello and sit down and talk with him. Some people would, you know, do a kind of respectful bow and some people would get down on their knees and bow. But the Buddha never gave any instructions that you should do this, which is part of the Indian customs people would do that felt inspired, or there there was our customer, whatever, and they would relate to a spiritual teacher that way, but there's never any instructions for laypeople that they had they're supposed to bow or they have to bow if they want teachings from a monastic. The monastics not allowed to give teachings unless they feel the person who's asking for teaching has some modicum of respect. So bowing is one way to show that but there's other ways of showing that too, you have to bow. And there has to be some, the rule is that there has to be some show of respect, otherwise, they're not going to go to do it. To me, it feels a little bit harsh sounds feels harsh to me that a monastic is not supposed to bow back to a lay person. It seems kind of odd to me that that's the case. So this person said, the first answer was this monk was there said they're outside of those games. They're not gonna participate in that. The second he said was that a monk will only about two that which is trustworthy. And a layperson who has no practice or realization is not trustworthy place to put your trust. But that seemed kind of odd to me too, because there are some really wonderful late people, some of here in this room, and, and, and also the different qualities and individual people set your qualities are very trustworthy and everyone qualities which, you know, I'd be a little bit careful around. But you know, we're mixed bags that most of us right? So you'll usually bow about maybe two the good qualities in the person and we appreciate it pull out bring out those those aspects of a person by bowing to it. And I've noticed that very interesting phenomena that when I, if I'm in conflict with someone, I sometimes find it hard to shake their hands unless we're kind of agreeing to disagree or something. And like, you know, agreement, but, but I'm always able to bow to people who I'm in conflict with or angry with, bowing expresses something different. It's like it's a bypassing or looking deep more deeply. Then that area where the conflict exists and seeing the person as a person separate from the issue of disagreement. And one of the emails that went around I read is that person who grew up in Thailand, said she, she very much valued a culture where people always bound to each other. Because it's always you always know that you can receive some expression to respect everyone else. It's kind of like a bottom line of respect that everyone has among each other. And here in America, she feels coming here. It's a little bit hard to feel that always because people aren't always ready to, to bow to you in some way or other.

So, so badly, so monastics, don't bow to each other. Don't, don't bow to lay people don't bow to the monks who have lower in seniority. But I grew up in a Buddhist culture, a Buddhist growing up, where we did bounce about each other all the time. And in fact, in San Francisco Zen Center, part of the teaching there, and you've read this in Suzuki Roshi, his books and my beginner's mind there's a chapter on Bali. A beautiful chapter I believe for me. And he says that a teacher should always be ready to bow to a student. And his students should always be very devout to the teacher, a wife should

always be right about a husband, a husband should always be right about a wife. We should always be ready to bow to each other. He says something like a teacher who's not ready to bow to a student is not really able to bow to the Buddha, or shouldn't be a teacher or something. So at San Francisco Zen Center, we all bow to each other. There wasn't a feeling that some people shouldn't be bound to because they were you know, you shouldn't bow back to someone, they bow to you. And, and in fact, sometimes students bow to the teacher, I mean, the teachers bow to the student. And so I grew up in a situation in a culture where bowing was kind of something we did to all to each other equally. It wasn't an expression of inequality in the Buddhist expression of kind of vague, I would almost say equality. So the American idea that bowing is, shouldn't be an American, a certain idea that about you shouldn't do bowing because an expression of inequality. I grew up in a Buddhist culture where I didn't feel that, but I felt it was actually an expression of very deep equality and a very deep honoring and respecting of the other person. So in Hinduism, they, when they put their hands together like this, and bow, they sometimes say namaste, and sometimes that's translated to I'm bowing to the, or paying homage to that which is divine inside of you, the God within you or something. And that's a little bit problematic for Buddhists to say, to the divine of the God within you. But the idea that we're bowing to something, each person has something very profound in their humanity in their, in their hearts and their minds and just being a human being that's worth bowing to, and something is lost. If we just simply shake hands with them, or say hi, howdy, That's something you know something expressed some deeper qualities and deep connection, respect, reverence of the of another human being for being human being some deep sense of appreciation of gratitude, gratitude for this world, we live in gratitude for a society of people who we share with. So I grew up in a Buddhist culture where that was kind of the vocab that was the word the meaning aside, assigned to this gesture. So I'm very comfortable I loved about, in fact, that would be very odd for me, if I lost this form of expressions, this, you know, it'd be much more if I didn't have this to express.

It does something physiologically to me to put my hands together in front of my heart, bring my hands together. And there's a kind of softening energetically, there's kind of a change that goes on. Suzuki Roshi in his chapter on bowing does acknowledge the point there doesn't acknowledge bowing traditionally has some meaning of, you know, you're bowing to someone who's as worthy of bowing to. But the most important point he makes there's at bowing is an expression of giving up our self centered ideas. And here is one way of looking at bowing, another part of the vocabulary of bowing, that bowing is an antidote to certainly to arrogance, which is self centered ideas to being too self obsessed with being self obsessed, doesn't only have to be being arrogant. A lot of people are self obsessed, and they're the opposite. They feel like they're, you know, unworthy. But they have this gesture, which is a kind of lowering oneself, kind of giving oneself up to something is a kind of giving up of self centered ideas, giving up our own attempts to manipulate and control things. So when I was a monk at Tassajara Mitel moto was, when in doubt bow and part of the reason for the Moto was But the reason for it was we bounced so much there's so much ceremony and activities that if you didn't know in a ceremony what to do, you wouldn't probably wouldn't go wrong if you took that opportunity to bow. And but I've come to learn that this is a very nice motto anyway. And when in doubt bow when you don't know what to do in life, Bow, bow to the uncertainty of it, bow your difficulty when situations

are hopeless, then bow and party they're bowing two things, two situations activities is a situations can be your teacher. If what's happening to you is you're caught up in self arrogance, self centeredness, egotism, and idea. I'm in control. I can do this. I can manage myself. When you can't manage yourself, I can't control the situation. Great. You bow. So one example of this. Now as I'm beginning to get older, I didn't have any right here right so I can say this is My body doesn't it works in all the ways that I'm used to, from when I was younger, my body's beginning to break down my eyesight is getting worse and worse and all kinds of things are not working so well. And my stamina is not so good and when I go exercise now, I used to be able to just kind of throw myself into exercise pretty much just do whatever I wanted to do. And now I need to pace myself because my body isn't just kind of up for it you know, the recovery period is longer. So now I have to learn to pace myself I can't like I can't do as I can't, I can't I learned that I can't exercise as much as I want to exercise because it just doesn't work the next days and not because I just simply because I ache but because somehow I haven't I don't think it takes longer to recover. So I have to exercise like you know, less. So I can do it every day. So in my body, you know my body, my health and all stuff. What am I supposed to do about that? You know, it's kind of like a kind of a letting go oh this to this to have to bow to this to have to let go of To my self centered ideas and what I can do and accomplish is a kind of a grace grace and vowing Oh, okay this to let go of this to accept. This too is my teacher. Because if you don't take aging as your teacher, I think the alternative is not so pretty. Your teacher about what let go of what you kind of self centered ideas of how things should be your ideals, what you think you need to survive and like get along in life and be happy.

So the Theravada monastics have certain attitudes towards bowing terrible and lay people there's no teachings about how they're supposed to do but golly, I can't like you look through a sutta look through the Abbe Dharma, look through the video, look through all the there's no teachings about what you're supposed to do what we're supposed to do, as laypeople. You know what that means? We can do whatever we want. And, and I would encourage each of you to reflect on this topic of bowing. Think about when in our society we bow, and why do we bow? There are times there's a side American side we bow, mostly on stage. But why on stage? Do we people bow? If you're on stage and someone's applauding you, Would you bow? Why would you do that in that situation? Why is are there ways in which you could use bellowing Incorporated, that has maybe some very deep meaning for you. Not only deep meaning, as a human being engaging with other human beings, other activities, but maybe deep meaning for spiritual practice, that kind of purification, that kind of refinement of character, that kind of letting go, that kind of self reflection and self knowledge, self understanding that comes with spiritual practice, does bowing offer benefits for that food and fuel for spiritual practice? The area of self understanding self knowledge. I think it's a book A wonderful area to explore. And if you're uncomfortable with Bali, I would suggest bow explored bow so you can understand what's going on there. Maybe there's very good reasons why you're uncomfortable bowing and about to those reasons and maybe there's something else going on there's valuables look at, you know, to me certain maybe certain kind of unhealthy self centeredness when Suzuki Roshi came to America, he changed the morning ritual, the chant in the morning in Zen Zen monasteries. And before the chanting, chanting, just like in tera, vaada monasteries, you do three bowels, beginning and the end of that period of

chanting in the morning service. Suzuki Roshi looked around America, these students and realized the difficulty they had with bowing and realized in his wisdom that Americans needed to bow more. So He instituted nine house they don't do three at 9000 Japan, they only do it in America, because Suzuki Roshi felt that Americans needed to bow to help them with their self centered ideas. So, what is it about what is it about another being human being? Out of respect? Is it possible to bow out of equality to equals to do to bow to some good qualities and the other person or maybe more profoundly delight in each person

or

the potential of Buddhahood and each person freedom sorry, to the place where we are one bound to place real one Some people say when you put your hands together, flat together, you're overcoming the duality of self and other

Zen Master Dogen said, Buddhism will survive for a long time if people bow. In the modern world, this has been translated kind of colloquial language. If there's no bowing, there's no Buddhism. I wouldn't go that far to say that I think Buddhism will survive without bowing. But it'll be a lot harder without that expression of respect, and reverence and gratitude, and all that comes with that gesture. So that's probably enough, probably exhausted the topic enough for now. I mostly wanted to stimulate your thoughts and ideas around it, to view you all to reflect on it and to challenge us a little bit to think about the topic more deeply. If you've never bowed much in your life at all, you might experiment with it, trying it on. So there's about three minutes left here and not very much time for questions. Protests? Yes.

It seems like such a natural translation of the knowledge state tradition to bow to the Buddha nature of the other. And I just wondered, apparently, any particular tradition and never pick that up and never made

a transaction. Yeah, it's it could well be I've never known anybody said you're bound to the Buddha nature and someone else. But But I could imagine saying that I can imagine modern teachers saying that Theravada monastics would not say it because in Theravada Buddhism, they don't believe in Buddha nature, exactly as it's been in any text what is Buddha nature, but you know, that's a Mahayana idea. So good American Buddhists may also be passionate Buddhists, or, you know, adopting a lot of different things from Mahayana, including using the word Buddha nature. And that's a whole topic for another day if you want to hear about Buddha nature.

You're at the center of the Los Angeles we were talking about your Buddha nature. But I like you were in the center where it really felt so natural to bow. Number one fat thing by his movie Roshi get down on his hands and knees and bow, one of his senior students, senior mouse month back to him, it just felt like such an expression of being human. But the second thing, though, you feel awkward about

handshakes. And he doesn't express stuff yet know the origin of the handshake. The handshake started in the mid late medieval times. And when they came to meet each other, these usually take out the daggers a lot of their head and for the kingdom, so would you didn't antec as was shown to have a weapon in your hand as a way of showing who disarm and so people came and shot and attention to know the origin of the toast. When people toasted each other they the classes came together. liquids with intermix, which means if you're trying to poison the other guy, do that. Liquids to interchange, and you have a toast to drink if you can trust the other person, so they will all have the origins of showing trust and you're not harming, which is a lot lower status.

Part of about buying is a expression of humility. And at the Zen center, remember, whenever someone's gonna give a Dharma talk, they'd always do three bows to the Buddha before they give the talk. And it felt quite appropriate to me to do that, because, you know, it's kind of like a question of humility, that with all of your, you know, shortcomings and partial understanding and partial practice realization, you were still going to try to the best of your ability to express the Dharma, which maybe you weren't the hundred percent qualified to express when you're going to, you know, at least show that humility show that you know, that to the Buddha at least You kind of do your best. Some people when they bow to the Buddha before Dharma talk, I kind of asking the Buddha or asking the Buddha Dharma Sangha, for you know, for help. Yes, Bonnie.

Japan last month, I was very struck by No, I didn't use their hands. And that there's this kind of unconscious mirroring that happens when we're in a culture that thousand a certain kind of way. So the first time I went like this, and so no one else did. You know, there was just a very comfortable way of acknowledging the perspective was prevailing and it's interesting to hear from you that there's different degrees athletic had to do with either introversion extroversion, our pasture size of people that are also quite different in their hands are very close to their, to their second obstacle, just a personal reaction that I have sometimes when I'm really in In a battle and it's usually only with my kids, sometimes I will stop myself. And it just dissipates everything. You know my kids kind of stuff and it may seem kind of strange but your story the way you kind of acquiesce with that, that man in your life, my dog will do this. For respectable, I believe in listening to this conversation as an interspecies reaction. And he's very selective, but when he needs a new dog, it's he will often go all the way down, and he just waits. It's a greeting, it's a respect. And then and then he doesn't want to the dog come to him, but something happens. He goes down, it sends off certain certain communication, the other dog will go then go down, and then they will meet somewhere else. There's something bad that relates to

the button. years ago, I Joe Navarro came to visit a retreat that I was teaching at Santa Sabina, the old students retreat. And, and he, he was just visiting for the day just kind of saying hello to the teachers there and just just, you know, hanging out for a few hours. And but we asked him to give a Dharma talk that afternoon. So he gave a beautiful Dharma talk on loving kindness. And it was one of the most inspired Dharma talks I've ever heard. It was just quite beautiful. And so at the end of the Dharma talk, he got up to leave, which teachers usually do, but that's nothing when I get up to leave

from here, right, but you know, couldn't care less right? You go gone by Time I Get up usually. And, but you know, he got up to leave. And as he was getting up, everyone in the hall stood up with him. There was no note no one had said, This is what you should do. There was no you know, we don't have any customer doing that. Everyone's doing that and put their heads together which gets people someone familiar with doing and stood and faced him and faced him as he's walking out the room out of respect. And because people have been so moved by that talk, and later people will say, Boy, I sounded like I was listening to the Buddha, you know, just so amazing this talk. And, and I was just struck by the, the, you know, the, the spontaneous spontaneity of this deep inner move within people not even thinking about it, I felt to get up and just offer him this kind of respect for what he just done. So there's some things that are some very profound kind of built into our system, perhaps this thing.

Yeah. I appreciate that. In addition to your conceptual discussion of bond check on various forms that you talked about the physiological partner just wanted to add about that prostration because I think that ended on the note of it always represents the sort of feet thing and lifting that that I do that in my practice for castration and now It's also all of these things, I think are very connected physically. And it's also true that when you sit as a machine where you, you sit and you sit, and you sit, and then maybe do a little slow walking, which is what they do in Zen practice, that it's very good for your body to stretch out, lift your arms a little in doing that nine times. For me, it really helps. And all of that's very connected.

Some teachers have given instructions to students to do a lot of bang, like 108 miles every day. Because it's really not for the exercise so much, but because it's so necessary for something. The mind is so stubborn. But do you notice that and it's so hard to get in there and kind of sometimes and do something with it. And it's sometimes you know, it takes, you know, a lot of bowing in Suzuki Rush's chapter on bowing he's talks about His teacher had a callus on his forehead from all the spelling. And he said he said I had to bow so much because I was I have such a stubborn nature yes

I thought about this until now in your talk but

the monster Ukiah, which I go to school on chanting and in the normal practice

of ox

bows are always done in three.

It has never actually been explained. But

at least to the right people so far as I know, but one incorporates as one goes along realization is good enough and is doing the vows always in three, you never lose sight of connectedness between each of those elements. Element becomes a single gesture always those three.

So that's a it's very common to hear that when you're buying three times you're buying to Buddha Dharma and the Sangha. And, and so when you're about to a Buddhist monastic, sometimes you're not bowing to the individual person, but you're bowing to what the what the robes represent. The robes represent the Buddha Dharma and the Sangha. And so it doesn't really matter if the person's, you know, is you know, it's a problematic person in robes, but you're bound to what that symbolizes. And some people when they bow will not just only bow but also will do an internal kind of cognitive thing. And sometimes people as a bouncer, I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma, so they actually say their mind.

When Pat and I were in Sri Lanka, we had a chance to meet the head monk and

better of the two.

And so when we met him, I pressed a three times and he said something to one of us. associates and translator Clayton later told me he said, I wish some of our people yes. Growing up in a tradition of no bowing, the only exposure I had to value was in the movies or stories and things like that. So I had no direct experience and this woman came five years ago when I started meditation practice here and I found that whenever I started bowing down, it was like a whole tension just released from my body just like it just melted away. And then then I read this chapter and Suzuki Roshi spoke about the about the sort of the releasing of the self that tightening lessons when when I do the mowing, and so I've just incorporated that in my daily practice all the time. Because it does reduce the tightness around the cell, because release this tension, this tension just melts.

During that chapter security says you should always be ready to bow. And doesn't mean you have to bow. But that state of mind or state of heart that's always ready to bow. What is that? Like? What do we like to go through life? Always ready to bow