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SPEAKERS

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So today, I would like to talk about something which I feel a little bit tenuous about talking about. So maybe we can call it an experiment. And, and I said that I say that as an introduction to the talk for a variety of reasons. Because I know that explained myself, because I've been told that you should never start a talk with any kind of caveat like that immediately means the audience kind of loses interest, you know. But I do it personally, because I'm not completely sure of the wisdom, what I'm going to talk about, but I'm going to offer you some things, some teachings that then help you engage in and engage in a variety of ways and to see what might be useful for you in doing it. And the reason I like to talk about this is that partly because I gave a talk recently Simply this week, a report group that's being of people. And I was kind of asked or kind of came up that this was an important thing to talk about for this particular group was to try to offer example of Buddhist models of purchase personality assessments, how to assess a personality. And, and part of the reason that I was called on to do this was that someone had done this some months ago to this group. And, and it used Western models, often coming from Christianity models. And this had raised a lot of frustration. So at least among some of the members have heard it too. We're all Buddhists. And in some people in the group, so they didn't like the hammer Christian tone of these assessment models. And people and also, a number of people in the group are been longtime therapists and longtime social workers. hospitals in various settings, and have seen the damage done, they say, of people who've been assessed in that kind of clinical settings, you get to see you get put in a category or this kind of person. And then everybody looks at your chart and they say, oh, you're that, and then they go into your room, we're going to see you and you've already been pegged. And they treat you that way, and they don't see you in a fresh way. The whole institution kind of, you know, takes care of you, you know, according to that initial assessment. So they didn't like so and then some Buddhists love the idea of beginner's mind. They love the idea of emptying your mind. And so this seems, seems, you know, it goes against the grain with thinking Buddhism is all about the idea of taking on some kind of categories of understanding human beings was really trying to do away with all our kind of understandings or biases and just see people fresh what they are. I had a very interesting discussion with one of the few of

these people on Friday, who had been social worker therapists and in their there's their frustration but how what they saw in the clinical settings around labels and assessments of people. And I realized in talking to them that I actually appreciate was appreciating various assessment models of people, personality types, understanding different things. And in talking to them, it became clear that a girl one of them, she spent 25 years in a clinical setting where people have been pegged into categories. And she was just so frustrated without and see the pain of she's kind of traumatized by that and she didn't want to hear that anymore. Anybody. And I'd spent 25 years or whatever, in a setting in practice, where I've just been trying to empty my mind. And I was finding that it was very helpful to bring in some of these understandings of human being since empty mind in mind. And so we're coming to different different places so that you know, depending where you come From this kind of discussion might be useful and might not be. So I tried for this group to offer to traditional Buddhist models of personality assessments. And I found myself starting off the talk by talking about how, in the terrible tradition, they don't talk about types. They don't consider, you know, so much, but they talk about, they categorize people, maybe it's typed already, but by, by behavior, and the word is carried them by how mode, a mode of being in the world mode of conduct. And it was trying desperately in my talk to avoid the word type. And in the course of giving this talk, I kept slipping into type this type in that type, and I just finally gave up and just went, you know, kept talking about the way but it wasn't my intention. I was actually trying not to do that, but it's so easy to slip into that mode of talking about people And that was pretty instructive how easy it is to kind of type people and put people into certain categories, even when I was trying not to. So you can listen and see how well I do today. And there are many different Buddhism itself has many different ways of understanding human beings models and assessment models or categories or ways of understanding people's stages of spiritual progress or personality types or various things. They are used to work types right. And so what I'll offer you is one coming from the Theravada tradition. All right, we do the kind of a joke around this kind of thing. Someone once said, there are two types of people in the world. Those who divide human beings into two types of people and those who don't. So you can't get away from it. So to start off, in this terrible way of assessment, it starts starts off with this very simple premise that human engagement with the world can take three general forms. You can either want something or you can not want it. Or you don't know, whether you want it or don't want it, you can either go towards something, go pull away from it, or again, just kind of be confused what to do about it. You can either be for something against it, you can and, or, you know, somehow ambivalent about what to do in relationship to it. So depending on these three modes there's two different directions. So these two In three modes can operate. They can operate in ways which are helpful for you in operating ways which are not helpful. If you need to pee and you want the bathroom, wanting to find the bathroom is usually helpful. That's you know, you know, pretty straightforward. And, but if what you want is, you know, if you want status, you know, by being the most greatest meditator on the planet, and you show up here and tell come to a Buddhist teacher and say, I'm a great meditator. That's probably not very helpful for you to kind of want that identity and a good teacher at least we'll just pull the rug from under you and say, that doesn't count for anything. And leave you without that kind of attachment. So that's probably a bad example. But but it can be you can take the wanting mode in ways which are helpful for you. You can want to meditate Take it once be free of your suffering and try to do something about that. Or you can do it way which is

not helpful for you, you can do it the, the driven by by attachments towards status, which I just said are to, to sensual pleasure to pleasure comfort, to relationships to money to all kinds of things we can want. It can be, you know, the movement to not want, can take it's helpful and unhelpful directions you can helpful ways is that you realize you're doing some kind of behavior or you're attached to something which is causing suffering and pain. And he said, I don't want that anymore, I'm gonna let go of that. Or it can take unhelpful directions where you have you see some person or see something, and I don't want that, and you push it away and you get contracted in that pushing away. And maybe it's a perfectly a good person, but the person reminds you of your fifth grade teacher. And so you kind of go and discount that person and so unhelpful movement of the mind to discount that person out of that diversion, that pushing away not wanting and then not knowing the ambivalence or not doing either one can the unhelpful way it can take the form of confusion or delusion, which is confused but what's going on? The helpful way is that it might involve a kind of nuts settling down on one particular answer to what's true. We'd rather kind of begin being willing to kind of look at different directions look at things are relative often in different perspectives where it and begin kind of looking and inquiring and considering and being thoughtful about the situation. And if you're too, too thoughtful, you might end up end up not acting either. You see all the different perspectives and so you're not exactly confused about what's what, but you see so many different perspectives. You're kind of like, you know, not gonna act either or the best one out there. I think they helpful side of it, I'd say no. Okay, So the helpful side, the unhelpful side These three basic movements. Now these so that the some people tend to have strong or stronger tendencies towards one of these different six. And so they tend to move through the world more likely operating from one of these six different modes. And so, these sometimes in English translation are called the six temperaments. And so the way it's talked about in the, in the Theravada tradition is that the unwholesome or the unhelpful temperaments or tendencies of mind are good greed, hate and delusion and the helpful ones on our faith, intellect and thoughtfulness or rumination. It's not so clear always in the text, how helpful The third one is rumination but it's kind of putting that 10 cents be put in that category. Faith, intellect and, and then rumination or thoughtfulness. It's not so clear how to translate the term. And so there's the six different temperaments. Some people have strong tendencies in one direction more than the other this way. But the ancient commentary that talks about these itself is ambivalent about these characters. These temperaments. It doesn't kind of come down to this is absolute. This actually says, there's actually 14 different types. By the user types. He had 14 different temperaments or ways of kind of conducting oneself in it. And if you take those first six, and you combine them in different combinations, so temperament which is strong and both desire and confusion are strong in faith and or something? So are then so can you combine them? And to get 14 categories? And then it goes on say, well then in addition, these things can be present strongly or weakly. So then you have 28 different ways. And then suddenly that goes on to say, and some people have three more categories. And so I love this because it's not saying this is the way it is, it's just kind of maybe a useful kind of way to measure things and, and it's kind of like what is truer? Is it is the metric system truer than the English boat of measurement is a foot better than the meter? Well, some people have opinions, of course, but they still do the same thing, right to get you, you know, measure how big the room is, and just, you know, it's a different way of measuring. So there's ways of measuring understanding kind of human

tendencies and human minds. And, and human beings love doing this kind of activities. And I know some people do it as part of parlor games. So people ask me, you know, What number you on the enneagram? And I usually, if I'm feeling kind of whatever I usually say, Well, I'm in number 10. The only goes to nine. And then in the back of my mind, I know that when I was in high school, we used to measure people, women or girls from one to 10. So by calling myself a 10, of course, it's kind of, you know, doing really well. So the parlor game kind of approach, some of the texts warn that you should never assess yourself according to these temperaments. And in fact, the reason why these assessments are given is not for parlor games or being casual about it. But the reason it's given to these texts is specifically to benefit meditation teachers. And it tells meditation teachers, the only way you can really know which temperament predominates in a person is by studying them for a long time. You'll make a snap decision about who they are. And the reason why, why the meditation teacher in this ancient system wants to assess someone is so they can give them the most useful meditation practices for that temperament for that way of being. was interesting, I think, is that if you see there's the helpful and unhelpful modes of these ways of being, in times of crisis or various kinds. People will often revert or go towards the unwholesome side of their temperament. I think it's more likely in times of crisis, not always that, that sometimes in modern psychology can talk about regression. We tend to regress to earlier modes of being so that sometimes in times of crisis, we're more likely to act from greed, hate and delusion. But when we're when we have good equanimity, we're balancing ourselves when our bodies are calm. We've gotten enough sleep enough to eat and, and we're not frazzled by what life is doing to us, then the chances are more likely for that other side stronger side to come out the hopeful side are more likely to act from these other votes, which is called the faith, the intellect and the and the more thoughtful. So what are these different modes? desire type, or the greed type is one that wants all the time, but it wants in a way, which is not helpful. So being greedy or craving and being addicted, are all expressions of that this kind of temperament. It said that it lends itself to being optimistic, optimistic temperament, you always kind of see the situation, what is most desirable, what you want. And one analysis that's given is for this kind of discussion is if, if six people walk into a room they never been to before, what is the first tendency in the to do to perceive Pick up a pay attention to that room. So the desire type will immediately look around for the most comfortable seat. And what are the nicest people to sit next to or the most wonderful part of it will just really appreciate immediately the color and the lighting and you know, all the things that are present in it. The aversive type will tune in and pay attention to what's wrong with the room. And you know, what, you know, tried to kind of pull away from that part of the room which is uncomfortable, those people would seem uncomfortable tune in to those people they don't want to sit next to so it's kind of a different approach. And the confused type walks in and doesn't know what to do doesn't know what to what to stand on what chair to sit on just wondering what in the world is going on here. The faith type walks into the room and maybe this room here and just feels inspired. Wow. They have a Buddha statue in here. This is great. And they just feel so great and wonderful and, and know that but actually right now there's three of them in here. And it's even better and I should have a Buddha statue in my home and wow these people are going to make Meditate and they just feel so great. And so I'm gonna sit down right in front of that Buddha statue, like, you know, you know, you probably affect it by sitting right here. Or maybe a desire type I don't know. And, and, and just in that there's that faith led us up to a wanting, moving towards

something, they're moving towards something which is wholesome and helpful when it's and so it's kind of related to greed, but it's a health healthful movement of towards something or wanting something. The intellectual type is mainly a poor use of word it's a word is Bodie, which is the same as the word Buddha. It's more like maybe being discerning. In going situation, the person is discerning what's going on. So a person walks into the room here and says, oh, there's just a little simple Buddha here. It's probably not a Tibetan scene. It's probably maybe it's one of these, you know, Tara Vaughn scenes is kind of a little bit of stare. It's kind of maybe this is you know, trying to understand and kind of begins understanding what's going on here and just asserting and looks at the stage on stage is probably warmer up there and, and I'm already warming up. So I think, you know, in order to really get into my meditation, I'd sit in place with the cooler and not get overheated and, and so what's you know, it's not so much movement driven by desire so much is driven by clear discernment understanding what's going on, that's a first tendency. And the ruminating type walks into the room and, and begins thinking about what this is all very interesting how they've done it. And I wonder if there might be other ways of seating arrangements and why do they do it this way, and I could easily imagine that speaker should be up on the stage or, hey, by the window, we should sit in a circle all good ways and, and, you know, in the in the mornings over by the time they thought about all the possibilities so I don't know if any of you recognize yourself in that all of it and The and there are certain certainly people who have at certain times will have these kind of temperaments predominate, and, or tends to be the default that people fall into. But I've noticed in different situations, different temperaments Come come after me. And so I'm kind of reluctant to want to be typed in particular way, but certainly seems useful for me to recognize certain situ situations, I tend to certain parts come out. And, and, and sort of recognize that to me, I found it useful to recognize, though, that certain people are manifesting at different times, certain kinds of temperaments or certain kinds of approaches. There are, for example, I find it very useful for me to just to understand aversive types, people who tend to respond with a version. And it took me took me a long time to understand these kinds of aversive types. Because it kind of wasn't in my kind of consciousness to be aware there were such people who's who kind of In extreme forms, we'll kind of almost automatically understand things from what is not working and what's wrong. And I would bring up some wonderful idea what we could do and say, This is all the reasons why you can't do it. And the person who wasn't saying we shouldn't do it, but, you know, I got felt assaulted. And, and everyone's I guess not, we can't do that. But they were just kind of laying it all out in a way that you know, for the discussion. And, and so we understand it was a diversity of someone who's meeting you with a lot of aversion. They might not even know that they're seeing the world through certain filters of what's wrong with the situation. And so perhaps learning to talk to that person a little bit different way, maybe not laying down, this is the way it is or say something very clearly, but rather maybe be more tenuous or, you know, various ways of kind of meeting that person. So that conversation can be useful when they're always being reversed. Sometimes with a desire personalities, I've noticed over three We were strong with desire really predominates in the person that sometimes I find it kind of sticky, it's kind of hard to, to get away. Sometimes, you know, they just don't, they just come in, in this love situation, they love the contact, they love the conversation and they love kind of, kind of the kind of a sentence of kind of sensual delight and what's going on. And then I really wanted like, if you have a task to be done, it's not necessarily that he has to get it over with, but rather

it's kind of to luxuriate in a situation and kind of take all the time in the world and, and sometimes, it's said that people who are strong desire, temperaments often will come on time to things, because they just love what they're doing. They're kind of engaged and enjoying what's happening now. It said that desire types, with everything's balanced their life is our type will go towards pleasure. And so we've had a nice balance in life. And meditation can work really great for them because they they tune in to the Pleasant aspects of meditation and getting really deeply absorbed into that and use that as part of their concentration, the reversal, it's also It's been said that for meditation, people have strong desire, often, for pleasure and meditation will often be quite willing to kind of move around little bit shift their posture, look for the more comfortable way of being, they feel really uncomfortable. They're not going to really kind of put up with that so much, you know, until they move around, it's a bit more immersive type. If they're given kind of instructions, this is the way you do sit still, they're gonna sit still, they can and so they get kind of tight and rigid, because this is the right way of doing it. And then the kind of kind of black and white about the right way in the wrong way. Where's the desired type? Sometimes it's not, it's more kind of, you know, whatever, you know, that's so caught by the right way of doing things. It says in the ancient texts that when aversion is predominant person could do much more damage in the world than When desire is predominant, however, when aversion is predominant, the first spiritual practice tends to go a lot faster than desire type. Because often the versatile will just not put up with things like I put up with my attachments, like put up with the nose like go much easier. I've been told by a friend of mine, that, who's an immersive type, that diversity of types have very little patience were confused types. And that's really strong. And, you know, so I don't know if that's true, but this is what I've been told. And so, you know, if you have those two personality temperaments together, you need to kind of understand those dynamics. And so what is the temperament that you bring to different situations? Do you bring at different times different kinds of temperaments, different filters or different views, different modalities for understanding your situation. In default ways, you're going to see the situation that you're in. And, and so you hear the word fundraising letter, and just immediately what? You know, or, yeah, great. Or, gee, I don't know, what's this about? Or faith type? Yeah, you know, also can be great. And this is one inspiring me. You know, all, you know, what, what's what's, what's the first tendency that we have, and to begin understanding that in order to learn to have an empty mind in order to be able to see through the biases that we bring to situations or to learn how to work with the bias that other people bring, not to kind of, you know, discriminate against them for the bias they have, and then to learn how to take into into account when we when we work with them. I know that for some people who, when I know kind of has some sense of the personality of a person of temperament of a person My tendency then, is not to take it personally in either direction, that they're acting from the temperament. I don't take their, their attitude towards me as personal visibility who I am. But also I don't take it personally insensitive. That's who they are. And actually find sometimes the assessment things is helpful to free me from pegging a person as this is a type, or this is this is a particular motor behavior this person manifests, rather than this is how the person is. There's a very subtle difference, but at times could be very important difference between saying to someone that you're an angry person, versus saying, you're a person who's angry. You're, you're a disabled person versus you a person who has a disability. You know, and so, because the subtle, the subtle, but big difference is that if you're saying that you're an angry person, that's the kind of person

you are and you carry with you If you're a person who has anger, then you know it comes and goes, is anger Now perhaps, but as a person, that's not your definition of who you are, by that thing. So sometimes by understanding a little bit about these assessment things, it actually frees me from taking that person personally, that's, that's who the person is, oh, a version is operating now. Isn't that interesting? I'm not gonna, you know, and so let's see what that's about. I'm gonna I'm not going to see that person only through that, you know, as I'm not gonna see this person as a versa person. I'm going to see a version happening now. And let's work with that. I've heard Buddhist teachers say, Oh, so it says so. So because in his ancient texts, it says it also reduces the personality temperaments to three. So there's a six, there's 14, there's 28, there's whatever, but also reduces it all to three. And it caught it to greed, hate and delusion time and I don't know why. wants to reduce reduced to those three and leave out those other three wholesome ones. But you find often in Buddhist circles then people kind of say where everybody is one of those three, greed, hate and delusion. And then teach. I've heard Buddhist teachers say, again, it's not something to take personally, it's not like a personal fault. Every everyone who gets born with something like this, it just kind of comes with territory. And part of practice then is learning to work with that. Now, it's not to be upset and feel like it's personal failure or benefit that you have one or the other. But it's just it's just the way things are. And so let's work with it. Let's learn how to become free. So how do we become free is then the function of these assessment models and the ancient texts. Use these texts to help us become freer. Understand what kind of practice are useful for the different temperaments. I remember, I was never trained in this way I can just read the text and see I don't know how useful it is to use the ancient ancient models. Thanks so much. I never heard teachers do a lot of I've studied with us a lot of this. But off your little bit of these kind of interesting. One is it says that partly, practice should not be reinforcing the temperament that might be getting in the way of people, the temperament that's making people not make advance towards becoming freer. And so it's said that sometimes doing loving kindness practice is not so ideal for desire types. Because it's a tends to be a pleasant meditation to do with lends itself to feelings of love and goodwill, and just feel so good. And so they just kind of love this feeling of goodness. And it kind of reinforces their desire and holding on to the present. And so it's sometimes said that for the desire type, one meditation practice to do is to meditate on the unappetizing aspects. Have the body. And you can decide for yourself what that is. And the other one is to do a little more analytical meditation, where you don't see yourself as a person receipt events or things as they actually appear as concepts. But you get the beginning kind of dissecting things and looking at things are made up of component parts. So if you have a desire for a person, you know lusting for a person or whatever, then you begin seeing that that human being is made up of different parts and not just physical parts, but mental parts, and see that, you know, where is it? What is it? What is it that I'm desiring here? And you start dividing things up and you realize that there's much more to that person, just what you're focusing on is the object of desire. Or you have some desire relationship to yourself and you begin analyzing yourself in different parts and, like, you know, what part is supposed to have? The status. Is it the body No, is it the Your perceptions? No. Is it your consciousness? No, and you realize that you need to divide it up. So when you can really find someplace to hang the head of status doesn't make any sense, but you kind of divide up who you are, and you can liberate it from the idea of wanting to take status onto you. So it kind of analytical meditation sometimes is encouraged for desired types.

Types right, for the temperament for adverse temperaments, then it said, Oh, for the desire temperament, it said, it's, it can be helpful to have Meditation Center in a hall, or whatever, that's kind of in disarray kind of decrepit and old, worn down. So there's not much to kind of want their desire. And so you wouldn't want to go to spirit rock for example. For four, four vs. temperaments said that you won't have everything really neat, really neat and clean and clean clothes on you and just everything kind of in place. So there's less things to react against. And so that diversion doesn't get kicked in. And there for the versiv personality or temperament, it said there, it's really good to practice. The brahma vihara is loving kindness, to practice meditation, some love because it's a wonderful antidote to that, that creates feelings of love and generosity and goodwill to kind of counter that strong tendency towards, or the tendency towards being aversive to situation. The further confusions type, it said, sometimes sitting meditation, it's really strong. It's really strong confusion, temperament. sitting meditation is not recommended. Because the breath or what goes on in the mind, whatever, it's just too subtle. It's too easy to get lost. You need something really coarse to really get your attention, to keep your attention for a moment and the recommendation there do a lot of walking meditation, with the idea that the steps touching the ground is a course very clear, unambiguous kind of thing, just you know whether your foot is touching the ground. And so you know, and so just pay attention to the feet touching the ground, you know that when it's happening, and there's no confusion about it, where's the breath, you know, it's more confused about it sometimes. If confusion is mild, then it is said that breath meditation can be helpful. If the person has a strong intellect, and it gets in the way a lot of discrimination or thoughtfulness, a lot of fun analysis of what's going on. Again, then the breath meditation can can be can be very helpful cuts through all that activity of the mind. So moving toward Origin object, moving away from an object, or not knowing what to do in relation to the object or not acting the relationship to the object or three modes of engagement with the world we have in the Buddhist tradition wants to suggest or teachers that there is in a sense of fourth mode of being in the world. And that is rare. It's not rather than because it's not, it doesn't have to be either over. And there's a lot of confusion when we think it's either or it can be both in and then the fourth mode is to be awake. And a mind which is awake is a mind which is not going towards away from or is ambivalent about what's happening. or there might be tendency to work towards, there might be tendency to go away from and there might be tendencies to be a bit ambivalent, but the most can be awake to that. And it's a wakefulness find its freedom from it. So it's kind of like I love I love the expression to be awake wakefulness. I almost prefer to to be mindful. Because the word mindfulness suggest to itself an activity of doing something and applying oneself and attaining something and getting somewhere getting more mindful, or understanding situation better be more perceptive what's going on. All which is a very, very important parts of Buddhist practice. But to be awake has a very different connotation, in my mind is least, to be awake to be awake to what's happening. doesn't suggest being for or against anything, doesn't suggest needing to change anything, but simply we're awake to it. And the quality of awake mind which is awake. If you're really awake, if you wake up from a wonderful nap and you're really refreshed, is you feel refreshed. You feel at ease, you feel peaceful, maybe some element of joy there some feeling of being somewhat energized, or some sense of vitality with being awake. So to be awake to what's happening, to have that a wakefulness where in the wakefulness there is no. Again, if perhaps you had the experience of being really awake from some wonderful nap

or asleep really refreshed, and you kind of look out your eyes, look into the world around you. And there's a kind of a clarity in what you see. There's not just simply a clarity in the object of what you see, but also kind of a clarity of, of the place from which you're seeing and the place your focus from what you're seeing is so clear, that it seems like it has no boundaries. It's almost as if you're looking back in your head and there's no boundaries. There's no there's no divisions. There's no place there's no I there's no self behind there. It's kind of like our eyes can function really well. But in in your empirical experience, where do you find your eyes? You have eyes in your period of experience but if you can look at a mirror you see them. But if you don't have a mirror to look at, do you have eyes in your empirical experience? Where do you find them? Can you perceive your eyes? Right now? You can't because you flexion on your glasses. You can see your eyes or you can feel them. Well maybe it's limit them to seeing. Can you see your eyes but the artwork and you can see your eyes but seeing is happening right? So if you try to look back and we're seeing is coming from does something disappear? Does it kind of stop the mind little bit or does it open the mind is awake the mind or What does it do for you? So to be awake when the wakefulness is really clear, there's sometimes can be a sense that the eye disappears, even though there might be still activity of the mind and things in the world. So the idea of being awake is incense the alternative, that Buddhist practice is moving towards. So rather than functioning, or in addition to functioning for wanting something or not wanting it or being ambivalent, the movement is the alternative is to be awake to the situation to be free. And the assessment models or Buddhism, are meant to be aids towards moving to that wakefulness age to help us become more empty, in a sense. So rather than age to going to a rather than helping us go through the life, with more categories by which to judge everyone. They're very function is to help us drop those categories. And in in or say the very function of those those categories is to help move us towards a wakeful state and a wakeful state is a state within which there are no categories. or there might be categories within it. But the mind is free of those categories. That makes some sense. So do you think that was useful? Did you really remember 10 years so it was at the beginning. I'm still kind of tenuous about it. But that was my attempt to try to offer you some classic teachings from Buddha But even Buddhism is ambivalent about. So thank you. And I wish you a wonderful holiday time for all of you. In the Japanese Buddhist tradition, December 8 was Buddha's birthday. And so that was the beginning of a whole series of different religions that have celebrate various things. solstice, New Year's. And I wish you all happy new year. I'll see you the new year. And please take very good care of yourself and your community during this time. Thank you.