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SPEAKERS

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For this evening, I'd like to talk a little bit about posture, meditation posture. And I think that there are plenty of people who don't think that posture is that important for meditation. After all, meditation is about the mind. calming the mind having a peaceful mind, focusing the mind, letting go of the distractions of the mind. And so the body, the body posture is kind of incidental. And so I would like to open by the end of the evening, to dissuade you of the view that meditation is just of the mind. The mind body worked closely together so closely that maybe not so useful to separate them even. And very important part of the training or the development of the peace, the calm the concentration of meditation, the insight and decision has to do with a body and also with posture, what happens with your posture. So, that's what we're that's the direction of the talk today. When I was relatively new to the passionate practice, after having gotten many years of Zen practice, I went to Nepal to practice a coupon DITA a great Burmese teacher. He was doing a month long retreat there. And unbeknownst to me, there were all these fairly senior American be passionate teachers had gone there to meditate with him too. And there were so many, like, maybe less than a dozen of us there Westerner sitting there with him. And so I got to meet all these teachers, very nice fellow practitioners, and there's one of the senior American teachers I shared a room with them is actually a teeny little room and just enough space for, for their mattresses, wall to wall. And that's what that's for our room. We slept there in that little room. And we also meditated in the room together most of the time that room. And so we're kind of intimate. And we also would go to interviews with a teacher, as a group, and person here that the teacher had away, but it had a way of deciding who's going to be first, who's gonna be last. And as it was, I was always the last one. And which meant that anybody who was ahead of us in the group went first and reported limitation experience, and then they would leave and the people who were left would hear them. So I got to hear the interviews of the senior American teacher. And there was very inspiring, tremendous detail careful precision. Great equanimity. Being able to report report is experienced very well. But after a while, a month long retreat after a while, he reported having back pain. And his report report in amazing detail how excruciating and painful it was in the economist by violence that he was very precise and was kind of inspiring. But he mentioned in passing one day that if he had been back in America and retreat, he would have gone to the chiropractor. in Kathmandu, there was perfectly nothing like that to do back then. And so I was, you know, roommates with him, two beds over. And I could see his posture when he meditated. And for my Zen point of view, Zen Zen puts a lot of emphasis on posture. He had terrible meditation. posture. He was kind of slumped over like this. And no wonder he has a bad back the way he's sitting, so you weren't supposed to break silence in these retreats. So, with great courage or foolishness I snuck over to him.

If you sit up a little bit straighter, it might help your back. And your back seat or posture is not so good to you're sitting. And he looked at me turned and looked at me with these beautiful compassionate eyes. Very, very present for me. He didn't mind that I disturbed his meditation or bothered him. He just looked

at me very nicely and he said in Zen you do it from the outside in. In the past, no, we do it from the inside out. I just shrugged my shoulders. Okay, well have it your way. And, you know, snuck back to my dead back to sit in my Zen posture. And so this idea of in zen, it's a little bit of a, there's some truth to what he has to say that in zen, the trainings offered from the outside in the form you take a form a particular posture, or you try to do that. And with that comes some interchange and development in the past, historically has been very little emphasis on posture and very little, sometimes very little instruction on posture. And people show up and are given two basic instructions follow your breath and pay attention and, and because their posture is not attended to carefully, sometimes they go through a lot of physical discomfort that Not needed unnecessary. And then slowly, there's something happens from the inside of the person. And sometimes the posture does change and mellows, it opens up in variety of ways. And if it happens, rightly, it's a beautiful process and the inside out. What I like to suggest is that it can be both ways, doesn't have to be one way or the other. And that some attention on the form of posture, the external is very helpful for this practice of ours. We don't want to be as single minded about posture, so completely focused on posture as any tradition is, but there can be much more than we currently have in the past. And so that's part of the theme of today is the value of focusing on posture, kind of like from the outside, in from taking the structure or taking a good structure, taking it Align posture and balanced posture, and the value of that. And I speak on this topic a little bit from having spent years and years struggling with posture, partly because of my Zen training. I did not have good Zen posture, my teacher with me correct me and correct me, correct me. You know, I got so many corrections and then once in a while they wouldn't correct you this come over and hit you, Daddy, so with this meditation stick, that they hit, you hit your shoulder, done well, it feels good.

And since since that, my time is in Zen center. they've stopped using it now. And it's so it's still you know, a teacher for me at training for me. posture is something I focus still focus a lot on and still have to focus on and work with. And sometimes I don't have good posture sitting up here. People sometimes come over, looked at me go open my eyes during sitting you seem to me like you sound asleep. You know, bent over. So I still working on it. And to get a sense of how important the posture is, maybe it's helpful to point out that the English word posture has these two meanings as the meaning of the physical stance that we take the physical way. We're aligned in line in our body, but it also has a attitudinal meaning. It's the attitude in which we enter into something, you know, for posturing. We come into IMC We're going to show who's the best meditators with posture. And no one ever said fostering. And so certain of attitude gets expressed. And so I think that these two meanings are not a coincidence, but actually that what we do with our physical posture often expresses what we do with our attitude. What we're doing with our attitude comes out in our posture. And you see that really well with young kids. I have a five year old who has it's really, really fun to watch his posture. Because it's like this this attitude kind of is like Oprah right now still, like an open channel that just gets expressed exaggerated i think is exaggerated. I would never do it that way. Maybe I'm maybe I'm already held and repressed and whatever, but he's just so complete. So like, you know, you tell him that. No, you can't have ice cream today and he is completely limp and You know, sometimes it's a certain a pause on the floor like, you know, oh, and the degree of tragedy that's been following him is just so dramatic. You know, or if he's just happy and alert, you can see this buoyancy and uprightness, he jumps in Phoenix, sometimes I take him to school and he's just so happy to school he's kind of bouncing down the sidewalk, you know. And they just feel the joy and the light. So his attitude comes through so clearly young children. As we get older, many of us have learned how to moderate the just hold our posture, so we convey just the right impression. How are you? I'm fine. Or am I pissed? I just can't stand next person who asked me that question. Oh, yes. How are you? You know, there's We sometimes don't show people as clearly what's going on as we could as you were five years old you would. But we kind of, you know, hold things, you know, in a bright, polite way we, we create an impression of how we want to be seen by what we do with our posture. And of course, sometimes it's not so if you don't have so

much control over it, sometimes it comes through anyway, it's clear when someone is really sad or depressed, you can conceive their shoulders and their maybe their chest is sunken and they're bent over. And no you see it when someone is happy and alert and they feel upright and you feel it, see it the flashing feel it in it from a distance, even just how they walk the sprint things. And so there's a very intimate relationship between the attitude and our physical posture that we take and the direction it goes in both directions. So certainly goes in the direction that our attitude gets expressed in our posture in our muscles, but also it The position you put your body in, has an impact back on your attitude or your emotions or your psychology. And so, it's possible sometimes to you know, you're mildly sad or mildly depressed and you find yourself slumped over in the couch. If you're walking around, you know slumped over to just stand up or sit up straight, and feel a change in your attitude, your feeling tone, for just changing the posture, open up the chest a little bit. I wish it was always that easy. But sometimes you can feel that kind of changes from changing your posture. Or someday when you're feeling really lousy.

exaggerate your posture, get into it. And chances are it'll it'll keep you in it longer. Get a really good couch, sink into the back crack, disappear there and it helps you to turn on the shopping channel. really getting to know this world of mine, what does it come to? So there's a close relationship between posture and attitude, attitude and posture. And because of that close relationship, the posture we take when we meditate has an impact on us. So if you just take the your native posture, wherever you sit down whatever way you want to sit, everywhere you happen to sit with any thought about it, then the posture you you sit in, is going to reflect the mood, the situation, your attitude, your feelings, your holding patterns of the day, or the lifetime. And if you don't, but if you don't, and if you don't pay attention to your posture, give it some healthy attention. Then your body becomes kind of like the slave of your attitude and slave of your mental psychology of your, of your resistance in your holding and everything. Set when many years ago now but I've had the experience of seemed like a horse for a while a whole bunch of people happened. And a whole bunch but you know, maybe over three years, maybe four people where I kind of like used to like more now but like to kind of face people directly when I talk to them now more relaxed about its cameras entering. And, and I get I know, maybe I'm intimidating, but some people would turn around 90 degrees and they wouldn't want to kind of, you know, look directly at me they can literally 90 degrees in your side like this. And so I thought that was kind of interesting. So I walked around 45 degrees, and then they would turn around and then I'd walk around 45 degrees and they would do another 45 degree turn. And amazingly, I could do a 360 degree turn around the person with the reason I'm telling you this is the I don't believe the person knew This was happening. It was unconscious on their part. So I think that there's a way in which we don't, we don't pay attention to our posture. It's kind of a subconscious kind of way in which the posture gets shaped and formed. And what we're being asked when possibilities in meditation is to begin taking some giving some attention to your posture, and also taking some responsibility for the posture you're sitting. When I was at Tassajara, Zen monastery for almost three years, much of the day, big parts of the day, sometimes were highly choreographed. You were told how to stand, how to walk, how to where to place, your hands, you know, all kinds of things. Everything is everything that was done in the meditation hall, and we spent hours and hours and day meditation was choreographed. That way. You have to walk around with your hands to get your hands together in chashu with one hand in a fist the other hand on top of it right in front of your solar plexus. kind of look around this way to walk around looking down, you take certain posture and meditation or to sit, you take a certain posture and meditation or to chant, you use certain posture, of course to bow. The particular way you have to bow hold your body when you about a particular posture when you ate while you're eating. So all this stuff was choreographed the way you saw when he came in, in the hall when he left the hall, everything was set up. So I was used to the three years of kind of being basically being told how to hold my body How to Be and it was a great training. I was very fond of that physical side of demonstrating the value of

some other time even can tell you more about the value of it. After three years of Sahara I came back to San Francisco and I was no longer living a choreographed life. And, and I was amazed. Now, how many choices I had to make for myself wasn't chosen for me. I had to choose for myself how he stood. How he said And I realized in a way I never realized before that there were a lot of choices they went into how I would sit in a chair or there could be a lot of choices and how you sit in the chair before I just sat in the chair and when you sit you just sit but I learned that there's choices you can kind of look at and see you know, are my slumping my on the edge Am I leaning against the back backrest with my using my feet, my feet grounded firmly planted on the floor and kind of stable and present my feet cocked under Am I kind of casual, you know, all kinds of ways that are going on there.

So I went to my the abbot one day and told him this. I said, you know, it was all choreographed. Now it's not. And now I realize there's so many choices that I have. And, and I feel like I take responsibility for these choices. And when I said that he did something to me, which I've never seen him do to me or to anybody else before. A formal Zen interview. You know, he's sitting there cross legged, I'm sitting here cross legged, it's very formal choreographed, that also, it's very intimidating. He was a big guy, bigger than me. As we're talking, so I told him this and put on his head and shook my hand. Congratulations. That was a really important insight, you really understood something really important importance of taking responsibility for what you do in life, how you are something as simple as posture. So posture, so meditation posture. So the idea is to take a posture that those two two things, maybe does many things, but two primary things I would like to suggest. One is a posture that allows you to become aligned is aligned and balanced. So you can sit pain free as long as possible, but also so that the body can relax and get soft, as as much as possible. It turns out that the cross legged posture, I read somewhere I read some physiological study, they studied different postures to see which postures you can get most relaxing, in the two most relaxed postures to be in, is lying down on your back and sitting cross legged upright isn't that interesting. And that's only if your body has is relaxed and soft in that posture. If there are a lot of chronically held muscles, when it comes hard to hold yourself this way, or your muscles are not toned or strong enough, then it could take a lot of work to sit up like this way. But this is this posture is one of the optimal postures for really deep, deep relaxation. So part of it is physical benefits from it, but you also get some input and as you work through those physical benefits, it's also a training to meet yourself in a very deep way. So if you if a person goes around being fearful all the time and their shoulders are up, high, bend forward like this rounded forward. And then you sit down that you're told to sit straight upright, and have your shoulders kind of hang and roll back a little bit. That goes against the way that this attitude of fear is holding you. And so you have to encounter that fear that way of holding you. If you sit in the couch to meditate and you're going to roll back against the backrest and your shoulders, then naturally roll forward. You don't get to meet that fearful part of your shoulders. But if you sit upright, and allow yourself to relax, then slowly you'll start slowly or quickly start feeling that tension that holding the steering the shoulders, and you get to meet that and work with it. The ability to work with the physical physicality of it, because the physical so closely connected to the psychological, you also then begin to work with a psychological things going on. I spent a lot of time working with my belly, I had a lot of tension in my belly, when I was first many years of meditation practice, you know, tension from fear. And it was kind of chronic and automatic, I would, after a while, learn to like relax it, and to be relaxed for a few moments, and then it would tighten up again. So this meditation posture where the stomach hangs forward, a little bit is more open kind of exposed, is a wonderful place to explore this area of tension there and this is how tense have relaxed them either in the stomach. And so you can sit upright, you can feel that, again, if you're if you're bent over or curled over, you're not gonna have a chance to feel the place of that tension there because there's no room for it to relax. You're all kind of kind of collapsing on it, folding in on it.

So part of the value of being careful about your posture in meditation is a training to work with your psychology from the inside, you know, from the outside in, to confront and meet this stuff. And I think that meditation posture meditation can be very deep form of bodywork. And people who do a lot of meditation in their careful with their posture or meditation, you could get this develop as yoga body, and their body changes and shifts over the years. And it's a beautiful thing that can happen. That shift and change, the softening and opening and aligning. That might happen that can happen. So we take a so it doesn't mean that you have to sit cross legged on the floor. There's not unfettered, trying to champion that today. But even for people sit in the chair some care and attention to how you sit in the chair. So you can optimize that the postural part of the training is really, really well worth it. Some people sit in the chairs and just kind of rely so much in the chair, that they're not really cultivating choice are they cultivating some inner sense of self reliance, inner stability, inner strength, not really sitting in a chair so they can meet themselves in some four way. This sometimes people collapse into the chair, almost to avoid themselves to escape or to finally get to relax and not, you know, deal with stuff. That's what meditation is about. Right is calm, you don't feel anything. That's what people think. But meditation is really about dealing with yourself in a very honest and direct way. And working through things to find the deeper peace. Now this superficial piece of relief, but the deeper peace of release for for people sitting on cross legged, or I think for anybody meditating. One of the classic models for meditation posture, we have is the Buddha image the Buddha statue of the Buddha. And probably there's no other image for Buddhism, as this represents Buddhism more than the Buddha, seated, meditating Buddha, people put it now in their gardens you garden Buddha's, you get the advertisements to see if and sometimes store windows is popular this figure, the Buddha meditating. And so it kind of represents Buddhism is often seen as being a meditative tradition, by symbol. And it's interesting to compare the physical form human form that's used to symbolize different religions and see what's being expressed what's being taught through that form. Of course, we know in in Christianity, one of the most common forms for the represents Christianity is Christ crucified. In India ism, sometimes it's Sometimes Shiva dancing, and Confucius, which is sometimes the sage, for long beard, I'm not sure. But they're different religions have these kind of archetypes that aren't just their symbols, but also they're teaching something. They're expressing some very important value and of the particular tradition. And so we have here this Buddha statue. And the Buddha statue is teaching something to us. By the very shape and form it's in, because remember, posture is an avenue is a gate into the mind into the deep, deep recesses of the mind. The deep depth of the mind is expressed through through posture. So, before I want to talk a bit about this statue, and what can be taught and taught by it, but I'd like to read

to people's encounter with pot with the Buddha statue. This is from a book by Sangha citta. Still alive, who's a very, very senior Buddhist teacher in England. He writes, I am reminded of a French Buddhist nun, whom I knew in Kalimpong in the 1950s. She told me that in her student days in Paris, she used to like visiting museums and art galleries, which is how she find herself found herself eventually in the female Museum of Oriental art. She was a rather militant, aggressive woman. She told me she used to go around with a pair of ice skates in which to defend herself if she was attacked. Well, I thought if I carry these skates with me, if anyone tried to attack me, I'd slip Wash the blades across the space. But as you as you stroll along the galleries of the human, having left the skate the cloakroom, looking to left and right rather fiercely, as you usually did. Suddenly, she encountered an image of the Buddha. From her description, I gathered that it was an image from ancient Cambodia. She just turned a corner and there was a celebrated smile, faint and delicate and rather withdrawn. So characteristic of this camera style of sculpture. The whole expression of the face is intensely peaceful. This image, the face of this image, just stopped her it attracts. She told me that you stood looking at it without moving, almost without blinking for 45 minutes. She couldn't take her eyes off it. The impression of peace tranquility, And wisdom that emanated that streamed in as it were, from those features was so strong that you couldn't pull herself away. She hadn't yet studied anything about Buddhism. But as soon as she saw

this image, she felt compelled to ask herself, what is it that gives its expression to this image? What is it trying to tell me? What depth of experience does it come from? What could the sculpture have experienced to be able to express something like this? confronted by this environment of awakening, she could not move away unchanged. In fact, he determined the whole steps. The whole subsequent course of her life is quite a story. When's the last time you looked at carefully a Buddha statue? So one of the things is teaching us is the possibility of peace tranquility And some people see that certain statues, some statues more than others. I've had similar experience of seeing certain Buddha statues, and you've been really captivated is the right word but really struck by how much something in the statue is resonating with something deep inside of me. And for me, it's never been the face so much. But oddly enough, it's certain statues have something about how the chest has been sculpted. And that is meaningful for me because so much of my my inner meditative life has to do with my breathing and the beautiful feelings that come with breathing. And so some statues somehow for whatever reason resonate with that feeling in me when I look at their the chest. why that is, I don't know. I've said I've said I've stood in just looked at statues for a long time, kind of feeling a communion with my own breed. Looking at it. So, what's being taught in the statue? One is that the Buddha is sitting on the ground. The Buddha spent a lifetime wandering around India. And often sitting on the ground, there's beautiful stories of him sitting in the woods under a tree with his monks and nuns around him, in the woods, all them on the ground sitting together. And there's something about sitting on the ground directly on the ground, which is very meaningful to impart something. For one thing, it provides us with a connection with nature with the ground, the very direct, immediate way. It's also a kind of feeling of being rooted, grounded. This low center of gravity. It's also in a certain kind of way, a little bit humbling. Maybe that's not the right word, but I don't think the glare exactly is humble. But but certainly not the opposite of how

There's a way in which everyone's on the ground together, there's a kind of equality that set in place. Whereas sometimes from chairs with higher and lower chairs and this and that, and so much posturing can go on, but when you put everybody there, we get everybody down the ground, you know, a certain kind of equality gets lifted, that's different than, you know, you could try that next time you, you know, going to meet the CEO of a big company. You know, rather than meeting her in her office, take her outside and sit on the grass outside, just you and her on the grass and have a conversation, the whole different thing will happen. So it's on the ground. And then there's this strong stability, this base, this tripod, which creates almost like a pyramid effect. And you have them this stability from the from being having a wide, firm base. So you Do that narrow meditation as well. But the idea is to sit in such a way that we're really grounded with a firm, strong base. Suzuki Roshi, once said, I trust two things. I trust my button, my cushion. And I trust my feet on the ground. This gets kind of interesting statement for a great semester. So again, I mean really here, rooted present here. And then the way that the hands come together and the feet have come together, they come together and they sit more or less in the same place. And on top of the feet, feet together, especially if you sit in full lotus, both feet come up. And there's a collectiveness that goes on to your your stable but you also collected in so rather than being dispersed and all kinds of going out in all kinds of directions. Now you couldn't meditate I guess, like this, you know, like, hands are flailing and I don't know Don't think that that would, you know, help you become very deeply grounded or settled, but be collected, collected in a nice way, pulled in settled, everything kind of everything kind of harmonized or cooperating in this process of being settled and collected, being here being focused, and also the hands are right in front of the lower belly, you know, breathe beneath the stomach. And often the Buddha has a little teeny bit of a pudgy stomach. I think that'd be kind of relaxed, kind of floating, broad kind of stomach that then provides a base soft base for holding up the rest of the torso. So they get into soft belly, relaxed belly, it's there. And kind of certain kind of cultures, it's rather unbecoming to have your belly go forward platform forward. But in meditation cultures, that's good to have you be unbecoming. And in fact, in Japan in maybe the 1400s or so they

decided that that having a big potbelly was a sign of having a lot of cheap like key, a lot of energy spiritual energy in your belly. So we went in, we did a lot of the certain kinds of sculpture and, and they they made a little kind of you know like half circle and they stuck it on their belly. Give them a potbelly. And you can see some of the statues you see kind of where it's been added on to show that they have good, good spiritual energy. Anyway relaxed and soft there. And also the hands and the feet come together that close to this place the center point, center balance, center of Life Center of strength, the hora area and cold and Japanese are very important area to kind of be present. They're connected. They're grounded. They're a lot of things. A lot of inner strength can come from being grounded here in your lower belly. And so you have this wide base, this firm base of legs in the hands, and then you try to be very careful with the balance of your way through your spine, so that the weight of your body kind of goes through the vertebrae of your spine. And that also helps create a nice feeling allows you to optimize the possibility of softening, relaxing the area of your stomach. And that becomes a very, very healthy thing to do for going really deep in meditation, and then the Buddha's chest is often he has kind of a big chest it's sometimes called the lions chest. And

it's meant to express confidence that you sit there with confidence with presence in our cave, then not lack of confidence, not puffed up, is supposed to be that big, but open and present. It also means a certain type of trust you taking a posture of trust, that your belly relaxed, and your chest open requires trust. And some people would say confidence. And that's a huge training for some people to be able to find that ability to sit in an open trusting way. Some people prefer to sit in closed ways, because they feel more protected, more defended. They don't want to be open to expose too dangerous to sit in the kind of open way. But the posture is teaching us to sit open and confident, open and trusting. And for that, that's that again, that's a meeting where there's a lot of training that goes on, not saying it's easy, but I'm saying confronting that part of ourselves. We might feel afraid or feel afraid to defend ourselves and working with that is a very important part of this practice of the posture. And then the shoulders are, are relaxed. They're kind of they're very relaxed, generally their soft shoulders kind of sloping down and both shoulders are equal, then that one's not higher than the other two equally, bounce is supposed to be symbolic of balance, be balanced. So your sit there in a balanced way, both balanced in terms of your weight and your position. We also balanced psychologically. So you're sitting in about 20, sitting in the balanced for way. And then his eyes, generally the speakers that use, the Buddha's eyes are half open. And, and the half open means that he's very present. But he's not caught up in the world. But he's also not caught up in the inner world. And he's not withdrawn from the world, but he's sitting there, present and alert. So that part of the overall posture itself is someone who is composed, settled, present, confident, and not withdrawn. Really here. They're taking a position. They're here, unapologetically. Without defense, and the eyes are open, meaning there's there there were there alert, meant to be an alert posture. And so the openers, symbolic of this alert quality of being. That's not just in the eyes, not just in the mind, but in the whole whole body is alert, alive, energized a certain way, kind of sensing, you're tuning into the world, you're aware of the world, attentive to the world to yourself, through all the pores of your body, through all the muscles of your body, everything is participating. And this has been a very important continues to be a very important part of my meditation is the way in which I tune in to my posture, and the lightness, my posture, the what's going on my posture, paying attention to it. And one of the ways I get concentrated and settled in meditation. One way is through my foot, my attention to my posture. It's sometimes called like a background, approach your background support to getting concentrated because in my eyes, it's so internalized in me now that I don't Think about it too much. I might be thinking or focusing mostly on my breathing, with the postures there in the background supporting that attempt to be present and concentrated. And then the eyes are, there's kind of a half smile in the in the in the mouth, it's kind of a half smile. And this is the smile of peace, of happiness of love, compassion, delight that comes from this way of being in the world. So again, it's not meant to be someone who's withdrawn from the world. But it's not almost not meant to be someone

who is caught up in the world. But it is wonderful balance of being in between those two, being fully rooted here, and then available and present for the world as it comes to us. The last thing I'll mention here is the teaching thing is as long long heirlooms and it said the Buddha has long here loves because before he became a renunciant He was a prince who had a lot of jewelry and he had really heavy earrings and the earrings, you know stretched to their lobes that are really long. So, what you see there is the consequence of his life of indulgence. You know, careful

you know there might be a long term consequences and also also symbolic there of that. There is a degree of renunciation going on here of letting go, that it isn't just a matter of launch, meditate with all my all my toys and all my stuff, the normal everything, but there is a healthy I think it's that you're supposed to symbolize a healthy degree of letting go of what is not needed. So you can see that still in his ears, he's let go of his jewelry. So we take this posture, we try to take this posture or to use this posture, look at this posture. The statue. And I love the idea of mirror neurons. So maybe one of the reasons why some people resonate with a statue sometimes with certain statues is because it excites their mirror neurons. And so we can feel we can resonate with some possibility in ourselves. And so what is that possibility and you are being composed, being present, being confident here, and how can you manifest that through your posture? Because ultimately, the statue of the Buddha is not so important. What's important is what you how you practice with this. And, as Vicki rescue said, when you bow to the Buddha statue, you really volunteer yourself. Can you see yourself and that's that you. You find that in yourself as qualities. So I'd like to end with

another story. Another account Mirror neuron accounts. And this is from Thomas Merton. And he did as it was called the Asian journal, he went to right near the end of his life, he died in Thailand. He went travelling to Buddhist tour turn toward a tour of Buddhism, Buddhist sites and places and he was very interested in Buddhism tour sites in Asia. And he was he was in Sri Lanka. And he wrote this. The path dips down to the monastery, a wide, quiet hollow, surrounded with trees. A low outcrop of rock with a cave cut into it. In beside the cave, a big seated Buddha on the left and Reclining Buddha on the right. I'm able to approach the Buddha's barefoot and undisturbed by feet in wet grass, wet sand. Then the silence of the extra ordinary faces, the great smiles, huge and yet subtle, filled with every possibility, questioning nothing, knowing everything, rejecting nothing. The peace, not of emotional resignation, but of liberation that I've seen through every question without trying to discredit anyone or anything without refutation without establishing some other argument. For the doctrine near the minor needs, well established positions, such peace, such silence can be frightening. I was not To over with a rush of relief and thankfulness at the obvious clarity of the figures, the clarity and fluidity of shape and line, the design of the monumental bodies composed into the rock shape and landscape, figure, rock and three.

So May the wonderful posture of the Buddha become your posture in the way that's appropriate for your body. Now for his, you find it when you come out of you and may train you challenge yourself that your work with this difficulties and the strains and the tensions of your body. So you can find that inner peace and possibility of liberated mind, your posture, your body is your great support and help in This whole endeavor, don't leave your body behind. So that's only about half of what I want to say about this very important topic. You know, I've been dealing with this for over 30 years. So I have a lot to say, built up. But maybe at some point and maybe in a month or two, I'll revisit this. Next week, I won't be here. Then when I come back in April, I reason I can't pick up posture again is I committed myself to give a series of talks for the month of April, Mondays in the month, April, on loving kindness practice. So we'll do that and then maybe we'll get back to the posture. Thank you.