

# 2014-12-15 Inner Wealth of Body

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

zen, practice, body, people, awareness, idea, monastery, vipassana, attention, posture, pain, sit, sense, illness, mind, instructions, teacher, mindfulness, bit, meditation

## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Good evening. Can you hear me okay? A bit louder. A little bit louder. Okay. We also have hearing assistant devices have trouble hearing you can use them there on the counter in the in the outer Hall there. So just work okay now. Yeah. Okay. Before I give the talk I want to mention that that home in the world is sitting group that meets said it starts at 730 this Sunday. I believe they're going to start at seven this this Sunday. Do something special for the holidays.

This evening I'd like to talk about mindfulness of the body as a foundation for mindfulness. And I was originally trained in Buddhist meditation practice and Buddhist practice in the Zen tradition. And one of the important aspects of Zen training is that that's very body centered. If you'd read books by D. T. Suzuki, or some of the Alan Watts or those people who wrote about Zen cotton in the 1950s 1960s, you wouldn't have any clue that the body had a role in Zen practice. But Zen training has a lot to do with what happens in your body what to do with your body. After I I spent five months in a monastery in Japan and And I, it I didn't think it was such a good experience for me at the time. And actually, I thought I was leaving early. But I stayed to the end. And once I left the monastery in the next days or weeks after leaving, I was surprised that I had been changed by the monastic experience. But I've been changed through my body, not through my mind, I think I was looking, you know, for some kind of mind change. But in the monastery, you put yourself through all these motions, and you use your body a lot. And the body becomes the way you absorb the teachings or how you change and all that. They give you a very simple example. In the monastery, Zen monasteries, you do a lot of bowing. And I once counted how many times I vowed from the time I woke up at four o'clock until, I don't know eight o'clock in the morning, and I don't know I forget what I got to but you know, 50 For something times about a lot of borrowing, and if you pass someone on the on the path, and the monastery is supposed to actually do a full stop and bow to them, you did all this bowing. And even if you don't want to bow and you don't feel like bowing to someone, you have to bow it's like the rules of the monastery. But if you do this, if you put your hands in front of you with palms, palms together and you don't have to do it, you're welcome to do it. It's nice to see I was just it was just a rhetorical if you do. But if you put your hands together, then especially I like I could do in front of my heart. You put your hands together like this, and you you tip your body forward a little bit like you do for a bow. It changes you ever so slightly. And it does and you know, maybe you don't notice it if you know the first time but if you do it 54 times before eight o'clock. The morning. You know, it's you know, it has a very different effect than, you know, making a fist with your hand you know, you know, where or you know, stop, you know, whatever, you know, there's all kinds of things you can do with your body, right? And, but what you do with your body affects your mind. And what you do with your posture affects your mind affects your mood, it affects your attitude, it affects a lot of different things. And if you do a lot of bowing in maybe for different people it does as a different effect, maybe what you associated with, but for me, it created a sense of a lot of gratitude, a lot of reverence, a lot of sense of respect, and have in the best senses of the term. I

kind of I don't know if humility is the right word at all, but certain kind of lowering of conceit putting conceit down. And it was so nice. I got to do you know, for three years now monastery was so great to do this. And then I went from the monastery, to living at the Zen monastery at Tassajara for three years. And I, when I left, I happened to go to Berkeley. And I was walking down College Avenue in Berkeley, and there are all these people on the street, you know, and but I just wanted to bow to them. But, you know, it was kind of it would have been kind of weird to, you know, about the total strangers on the street. So, I was feeling a little bit kind of, like pent up or like a little bit like, you know, got to get those bows out. And, and, coincidentally, down the street, about half a block across the street. I saw a woman who had spent part of the summer at the monastery. And so I yelled at her, you know, I called out to her and said, you know, hey, hey, stop, and I came over to her and I bow to her

Because that that sentiment was there, and the and so one of the things you do with your body in a Zen monastery, a lot of the is meditate with your body. And the body is a very important part of the meditation practice. And so in zen, the if you go sometimes if you go to a Zen monastery, and especially here in the West, and get instructions in meditation practice, I think some Vipassana it's like mindful. I mean, people do mindfulness practice in this usual American Way, or Vipassana practice, they would almost not recognize it for because it's so different. The first thing you're you're told, is how you stand in outside the meditation hall, and how you step across the threshold to go into the meditation hall. And how you bow after you get across the threshold and how you walk across the floor. To get to your seat, and how you bout your seat before you sit down, and how you sit down and how you in what way you sit down and, and how you turn around to sit on your cushion. And how then you then you're told how to sit down your cushion. And again, very, very exact instructions sometimes on exactly the posture you're supposed to take. If you're in Japan, in that posture sitting in full lotus, in the West, that's not so you know, so important. But, in fact, in Japan when the, if the monks, sometimes it's, you know, you're wearing these black robes, and if you were, if you sit in full lotus, what then what you could do with someone is you can sing like this right? Then if you go behind them can just underneath like they're right, but like there's little space between the zafu and if you take They had these big sticks that they hit people with and then and, and, and so you take a stick and you stick it underneath here, and it'll come straight out to underneath like this. But if you are sitting like the way I see it these days like this, right like this, if you do that with a stick, it hits something out. So they would periodically come around and make sure that the bugs are sitting in full lotus. But because I was somehow because I was, you know, I didn't expect didn't have high expectations for me. So I didn't get this dotnet thing, but, so, the point being so, the current structure, but the point being that that very particular posture, so with your legs, your hands have to speak to a very particular way you know, you know if you sit see people meditate here, hands are all over the place. But everyone has said the same way. The pot The back has to be straight in a certain way, I can't tell you how many times teachers come over and send teachers and straightened out my back. Because I was slumping, you know, this very particular thing with your chin with your eyes, even with your tongue, they give instructions for what to do with his tongue. case you're wondering. And, and. And then sometimes they'll just say, and you sit there and you do that until the bell rings, the end of the meditation. What? What about mindfulness? What about what am I supposed to be mindful of. Sometimes they give you a little bit more instruction, they tell you to, to be mindful of the breathing. But a lot of the mindfulness has to do with that posture. And if you're not used to this posture, then it takes a lot of attention to keep that posture and be there. And there's a lot of kind of enforced awareness because if people are new to this, it's uncomfortable to take a Zen posture and so you have to kind of your your, your your attention. is clearly called to your body because of the discomfort. And but the idea is also in Zen is that during that 40 minutes of meditation, you're not really supposed to move at all. And so you're sitting there completely still. And if you're uncomfortable, and you can't move, it brought things even more attention to your body. And so your body's like really front stage, you know, specimen center of what's going on with your body being in your body. And so

there's a tremendous emphasis on being in your body being connected to your body. And it brings a certain kind of presence into your body into when I was studying Zen. They didn't use the word mindfulness. They just said he would take this posture, but that posture required a lot of attentiveness.

And, and the current kind of strength and certain kind of confidence. You know, as I said, you know, what you do with your body affects your mood. If you take an upright, dignified strong body posture, it affects your you know, chest is open, his shoulders aren't hanging, if you do it over and over again it kind of affects you in some kind of way. And so, what happens, what can what can happen what happened to me is that there was developed a very strong reference point of being grounded and centered in my body being present in my body, a certain kind of presence or beingness in my body. And that sense of just and there was just the idea of just resting in that beingness just being present for that. There was no instruction given on changing any of my experience just to be just be in the experience and that just being in the in the body. Often there was very little instructions what to do with a mind except, you know, Come back to your body be in your body if your mind want to be in your body or be, or be with your breathing as part of the body. And so what I found after a while is that they're starting to be being more and more centered and present in the body, a kind of an awareness, or kind of a sense of being or a sense of awareness that emanated arose out of the body. And so, one of the things that started happening to me is my center of attention, of where awareness resides, was no longer in the brain. And before I did that, and if someone said, we know where you're aware, I would have pointed up here in my brain, and after some time of doing Zen practice, someone asked, Where are you Where's awareness? I would, I would point to my body, it's resides in my body awareness is no longer in the little control tower up above. And then over time, that sense of where radiant awareness that kind of seemed to emanate to arise out of the body, after a while, just seemed to emanate and arise and just be, you know, have no location or if there was location, I just, I would just go like, my arms is great. It's everywhere, kind of feeling. Big, big arc with both arms. And so there was a, it wasn't that I was being mindful, but rather, rather I was how to say this. It wasn't that I was practicing mindfulness. I was being mindfulness. Being attention, I wasn't doing awareness practice. I was being I was simply being aware. And my job was to just be in my body, and then be relaxed and as you get into, you know, have to have you relax and get more centered in your body and relax. That sensitive awareness is naturally there. So this is why I think because the Zen master Dogen, the founder The particular school of Zen that I practiced. He defined mindfulness of the body, as the body's mindfulness, mindfulness bodies with bodies mindfulness. And a lot of people when they think you know, if people like me give instructions, be mindful of your body. So many people think that they're supposed to kind of do something with their attention in the control tower, and look down directly to the body, like attention is directed towards the body, but rather rather and zen, the idea is that awareness arises out of the body. And to be mindful your body is not to direct attention in the body, but rather to relax and allow that sense of presence and attention to be there.

In the Theravada tradition that we practice in here, that sense of presence and awareness arising out of the body rather than directed to the body. is part of the function of Samadhi practice of concentration practice. And many people say that Zen is primarily a concentration practice. And the idea is is more, the more you're, the more you're developed Samadhi the more the awareness becomes pervasive, it pervades your body actually part of the instructions for Samadhi practices to pervade awareness throughout your body to awaken the body. And so that awareness becomes something that is being expressed, rather than something you do. And so in zen, they talk about rather than saying you're doing the practice, it's more like you're being practiced. And that's very different for people who are very kind of ordinary kind of course of how to use your mind or do your practice is to be the one who is the doer. I am going to do the practice, you know, so I have to get coffee. Trying to do this you know, and gotta

listen to the instruction. So I know what to do and, and where do they say ABC, you know, and all this kind of just whole thing you do. So you're doing the practice. In zen, it's kind of like more like you're being done, done too. Because you've created the conditions, you've created a temple, you've created a monastery in your body, by how you sit and by relaxing and having awareness kind of be here. It's a it's a, it's a difficult thing to learn for some people because of how much ordinarily we kind of are taking responsibility for our life and trying to do things and trying to be successful or trying to do it right or do you know follow instructions or just just ordinary ordinary to be the one who does to do work, and it's fine to do that. It does work to do that way. Just a little different route to get into the meditation practice that way and And but the Zen route is more Zen route is more from the inside out. And a little bit inside out outside in. When I was in Nepal, my first was doing this practice of Vipassana. I was practicing with my Burmese teacher. And they were, we were in a little monastery there, small room with was a bedroom for four of us American men, Western men. And one of the senior American department teachers was sitting that retreat. And so we would mostly meditated on the mattresses on the floor in this little room. There's just enough space for mattresses. And so we were sitting, you know, we're pretty intimate, sleeping in the same room and, you know, next to each other. And then we had interviews with a teacher together to group interviews. So I got to hear the senior American teacher have his interviews with his teacher and at some point he started talking about his Back pain. And he had a lot of back pain. He said, he said that he would know if I was back in America, I would be I'd leave the retreat and go to a chiropractor because so intense, but I can't. And then he proceeded to explain or describe to the teacher in great detail, that the fine details of the experience of pain is back, that he was very mindful. He's very attentive, he was at a great capacity to practice. And he was just it was I was so inspired by this description of pain, wow, you could do that. He paid that much attention to pain and really kind of just be there with it that way. And he was he was very equanimous about it. And he said, If I was American, go to the chiropractor. And, but we were meditating next to each other. And his posture from a Zen point of view was kind of poor. You know, he was also kind of slouched over bent over you know, if you slouch slouch a lot when you meditate. Four weeks on when he was four weeks we meditated there, you know, puts a lot of strain on the back and I thought, well, if he just sits up straight, he takes it, you know, it'll be a lot better for his back. So I, I broke one of the rules of the retreat. I went over to him one day in our little room, I said, I whispered to him, you know, if you sat up a little straighter, I think it might be easier for your back. And he looked at me towards with great care and compassion. I just hit the socket. So it's kind eyes. And I was there as a Zen monk. And so he looked at me and he said, Oh, from zen, you do it from the outside in. And we do it from the inside out the practice.

And I just kind of in my mind, I just go well, if that's if that's what you're going to do, then, you know. And so in zen, it is a kind of outside in the sense you form you know what you do with your body you put your body in posture can seem like it's outside you know from outside in. And in then there's in Vipassana for him it was like from the pay attention to what's in there. But I think in zen, the idea is you start with this form that you take. And then with time something awakens within awareness awakens, awareness becomes radiant, or radiant emanates or rate or flows out. And it's not you can't take it as being yours. Sounds like a personal thing. Because you're not the one who's doing it. It's just, it's just being done. So mindfulness of the body is the body's mindfulness, and your body and your mind your whole all your senses can operate without you telling them to operate, right. So your, you know, you don't have to tell your eyes to see if you are, if you have eyes that function you can open your eyes and They'll see, right? You know, for most of us, you know, we are constantly aware of our bodies as we negotiate our life and walk around. We're just not thinking about it, you know, we might be kind of not paying any attention to our bodies or our bodies are certainly paying attention to the environment into ourselves and our balance sheet or just to try to sit up, stand up straight and not, you know, you're standing straight for a line in the supermarket. You know, you might be involved with a national enquirer. But, but your body is paying attention to keeping you upright and balanced, you know, and not

tipping over and little subtle adjustments. Your body is being aware. And so the body has a capacity to be aware of what's happening, be conscious or be aware or register what's going on. And so the idea is to kind of relax and allow that inner awareness that's there already, to up to kind of operate or be known in the space of awareness allowed to be Come out, rather than, you know, to do it all kind of in a mental way. Sand practice can be very frustrating for many people, because it's a hard thing to understand. And what I saw in some of the places from a ton of monasteries I practiced in, especially in Japan, they were very poor at explaining this. And so, you know, if you had a whole other way of operating, you know, you know, you couldn't quite get the idea that you're supposed to, you know, trust the body, or relax into the body or kind of allow allow this thing to kind of arise and flow through you. And so what Zen practice has a lot to do about is letting this inner thing express itself. It's a form of expression, rather than a form of doing rather than a form of accomplishing. And so in the Zen tradition I practiced in the idea of having a gaining mind was to boo You're not supposed to practice in order to gain anything to accomplish anything that was already diluted. And so then you know, what, what? Why am I doing it, then? What are you supposed to do something for no reason at all, it has to be a reason to do to accomplish something. And that's lovely because then you get to face and deal with all this, you know, need for reasons and accomplishments and wanting and getting proving and all kinds of things. But ultimately, the idea is not not to be involved in gaining idea because then you're not letting the practice to you. You're if you're trying to gain something, you're the one who's trying to do something. So you don't want to let go of this kind of me doing something and just kind of allow this expression to come out. And so and then they have kind of, you know, ultimate, great religious language for this. I mean, they say that that's your Buddha nature or you'd be a Buddha or you're expressing your enlightenment or expressing realization practice realization is one. And so it's a little bit perplexing for some people who don't know what's being said. But it's this sense of allowing awareness to come out or just be there as an expression of who we are like an artist expresses herself on the canvas or a poet writes, poetry is just sometimes just an expression that comes out. So in zen, it's this kind of, as I call it, this awareness of the awareness that resides within us operates begins to flow and operate is just there and be present.

And that doesn't need anything, doesn't need to accomplish anything, doesn't need to get anything. It has nothing to do in a sense with the usual you know, sense of being a being the agent of your life and personal agency and getting things done. So that that gets more and more to the receives more and more, if not to the background. Right, exactly. But again, how to say it, the sense of you being an agent, you can do things remains, I found at least remains to serve oftentimes, but it becomes I know for my sake, it's small, smaller and smaller, but everything else gets bigger and bigger, or the sense of proportions change, change. And so, a mind that is able to that little bit as engaged and, you know, figuring out, you know, turn left turn right here in your practice, making little adjustments and all you do, might still be operating. But it's just a kind of a small little, it's like little like, essentially little, that little adjustment, little kind of like encouragement, go here, go. So just sit up straight, lean new but the new bit further back or set up a little bit straight. You know, or, you know, or now My mind is caught up in thinking. And, you know, I think maybe I should come back to my breath, very simple, innocent thoughts like that, you know, you know, involve some agency, but it's a small little percentage of this big sense of presence, that's just here. And it helps that little sense of agency. But it's not it's such a small part of the picture. where sometimes, when people meditate, they think that the part of agency the part that they're supposed to pay attention, and do all this stuff, that's like 99.9999% of the game for them. And when that's the end, use tie yourself in knots because you have to trust and allow something else besides, you're you're trying to do something in order for the deep relaxation deep letting go, that, that meditation, you know, deep practice is supposed to be a be about so for me My Zen training was the was a foundation for when I was introduced to Vipassana practice. And so I carried with me the sense of the body being the reference point or the body being a place of stability. And so the, the attention isn't



attention that is, for me, it's kind of second nature to be in my body and use that as a reference point to be there. And then from that comes kind of an awareness, which is innate, rather than added to that added to it sounds like I have to muster up and knock and I gotta be here to pay attention, you know, and, you know, it's more like, relax and or, or reconnect to the awareness, which is there. It's there. That's it, it's there. I benefited a lot of time to learn, the more detailed we passed the practice of paying very careful attention. To some a different things in my life. And I found that ultimately it was more satisfying and more meaningful to do the Vipassana practice where they were great care and attention to really notice how the mind works, how the emotions work, what's going on really going on in the body, but I saw in Zen is that they were like, like, for me for years, I just use myself as an example. I learned a lot about this kind of presence in the this experience of beingness that emanates out that felt so good. And, but I had no idea of how to track that I was angry. And people sometimes say to me, you know, Gil, you know, you seem to be angry a lot or a lot of resentment. Because, you know, like, really, really, I know. And because I wasn't, you know, there's a whole part of my life, parts of my life that were not open to this kind of wasn't told to me include in this realm of attention. So like my way, my cognitive life, the mental life. You know, I didn't pay any attention to it really, which was probably a good idea for the most part. But But, but the but as I did the past that practice, I learned to open up and learn to really pay careful attention to a wide realm. And I learned that the tremendous value of knowing Zen I learned the value of being and so that combination of being a knowing was very effective for me.

And so as I said earlier, I think that one of the ways that in our tradition now that I teach in here, that we're this comparable thing, has a chance to kind of surface and arise is From a sense of concentration practice or Samadhi practice, don't that you have to do kind of a different practice, but the sense of dropping in relaxing into the body and letting the body kind of soften and relax and open. So the awareness is not just awareness of thinking about things or just knowing things like recognizing things cognitively. But it's really kind of being present fully being in the experience. And that being in the experience, touching experience with your body, is what Samadhi practices in Buddhism. And mindfulness is more than knowing. So somehow or other to bring these two together so they're in harmony is and working together is traditionally one of the key aspects of how practice works. So your body is your temple. Your body is your monastery and your body is something that if you Learn how to be in your body be connected to your body will bring you tremendous benefits tremendous. I like the word use the word wealth, tremendous spiritual wealth inner well. And so to not leave your body off stage as you live your life, but to include like, not only include your body, like paying attention to it, but be in your body. So when you write your zen, when you do things, you're supposed to really do it with your full body. So, you know, so like, you know, you in Zen in zen, probably a teacher, you know, wouldn't do what I'm about to do now. I wouldn't just be kind of like talking to you all and kind of picking up the class and just kind of keep talking and saying it important things to say. And let me keep telling you the important things. But rather, you know, it means a little bit stereotype but rather, the teacher would stop

Now we can or we can continue the talk. So you would go really deep be there for one thing and what you're doing and that the training to be with present for your body and allow that to come out. So I hope this was okay to give this talk, but never met. That was my background and I was reminded of it recently and it was nice to be reminded. So do you have any questions about that or comments about that or protests

bye Sir Mike over on the stage there somewhere,

yes. Is it up to my sound like a mon. Okay. I remember a friend of mine who was in the go Inca tradition. And she had tremendous knee pain for years and years and years and she did everything that she was supposed to do, and she still had knee pain.

So I guess my question is,

are you just supposed to pay attention to it just endure it?

Well, so this is one of the things I saw again, in Zen because it's being being practiced was so strong and just and being still, there wasn't a lot of emphasis on paying careful attention, like we do in our practice and Vipassana practice. So I knew a lot of Zen students who injured their knees and the surgery because they would just endure the pain. And whereas if you pay very careful attention to the pain, I generally believe that you'll you'll get your you'll feel or see this the difference between a pain signal that says danger and a pain signal and says it's okay. And you can actually feel the difference between those two. And if it's dangerous, you should move. And if you're in doubt, you should move. But there are some Buddhist traditions in some schools of Zen and the grand tradition also, where sometimes you're told not to move. And most physical damage I know that happens people meditate is when they sit with pain for too long, don't listen to the danger signals. And then something gives out. So by all means, if you've got any sort any idea that it's dangerous, the pain you're have, you should move. And one of the ways to know that physical pain is dangerous that you might injure yourself. Is that you if at the end of the meditation you get up, the pain persists for 510 minutes after you get up, then you then it's an injury. And you should use that it's not a good idea to do that again.

One of the great movements in our own pain and sitting in meditation is to have a lot of pain you can't you know, it hurts so much and you can't i can't take another second I can't take another minute. They forgot to ring the bell please ring the bell you know, ring the bell. You know, it, I can't do it. It's impossible. Because you know, I'm sure that belt person fell asleep, you know, please, please. And then finally the bell rings is off. Thank god they rang the bell. And then you thought that was so good and you kind of look around and wait a minute. You know, the neat I haven't moved and the pains gone Where did it go? You know, there's a certain degree of pain has to do with the mind. And then the feedback loop of our fear and aversion itself. And, you know, so sometimes fair percentage of the pain is cycle has a lot to do with psychology. Maybe not all of it, but you know, it's this magnification loop that can go on with the mind. We have five, six more minutes. Anybody else have any questions or Yes, please introduce them as people who can't hear otherwise. Is there a mic here that Here comes behind you?

I was interested in your talking about the Zen being practice versus the more of a persona or not more, but just that there maybe is a little more emphasis on these different ways versus knowing and thinking about practicing through illness along illness over a long period of time. And I feel like I have some understanding The being part of that because it's inescapable. But I haven't really found any way of dealing with the knowing part of it because even the word illness has such a negative connotation

to begin with, and so

I would love to just hear you talk more about sort of the being and knowing with illness,

being with illness. Well if you sit quietly maybe and close your eyes and relax that'll be good. We'll be focused and relaxed and let the discursive mind the usual consciousness, mind quiet doubts, you know,

having conversations with yourself or with people or whatever. And then look for illness. You won't find it.

You'll find pain, you'll find weak Notice and tiredness, you'll find particular things. But illness is an abstract idea. So if you're looking for illness, you won't find it then. But in the normal discursive mind, we're operating kind of up here, in generalizations of things, and the word illness is a generalization. So it might be interesting for you to do that exercise and see if you can find the illness. And if you can't find it, how are you with your pain and tiredness or whatever you have, if you don't use the word illness, if that word is not relevant anymore. Is that an interesting answer?

I think, I think that has been my experience, which is part of why I was saying that.

In that, that, that way of

connecting with it through knowing I feel that I don't have any way of Connecting and maybe I don't want to connect with it, that it that it's very much a bodily practice of, of the noticing what's there the pain, the tiredness. But I feel like in particular when you were talking about knowing and talking about sort of recognizing your emotional life and your cognitive life and sort of the insights that came from that Yeah, I'm I guess I'm, I haven't found a path to insight yet through

through that.

Oh, yeah. The illness is a very, very powerful place for deeper understanding. Anytime our life is limited, anytime or we're not. Things are uncomfortable and difficult and not what we want them to be. It's it's a time for meeting aspects of our psychology, our mind or emotions or reactivity, there's a whole universe of things to discover, until you can be present for it all. And be free be at ease. So until you're at ease, one of the things you can start looking to investigate and know is what is the disease that you're having? Not the disease, but the disease. That makes sense. So, yeah, so, what are the emotions, you know? So, what are the emotions reactions, what are the beliefs that are operating and to be so again, it helps to have the mind get quiet. So that the discursive mind is not there. But still that some of the reactivity, some of the thoughts some of the emotions around being ill might be thought operating with, notice discursive mind. And so then you can start to kind of bring attention to look at that and see it operating as this kind of relate relevant. And so you can ask questions to yourself, like You know, what am I believing right now? Or, or what's the attitude that I have right now towards whatever is happening? And that might kind of start revealing some of the details. And then when you go to a doctor, you say I've been illness. I saw someone before back there. Elaine, did you have a question?

I just had a really simple question. So I tried Zen. When I was in my probably late teens, and it was very confusing because I didn't receive any instruction at all right, except I saw the guy with a paddle and, and it seemed very strict and everyone was very careful. They were moving in Very mindfully and with great awareness and very slowly. And so, you know, I tried my best to imitate them without really understanding. I was really just imitating the behaviors. And I remember hearing a couple people being hit what was the paddle? And I was always really curious. It was

done right. It feels good. If it's, if it's done, right, oh,

I actually thought well, I remember thinking, gee, you know, this could feel really good because I was so stiff, like trying to be completely upright. And so just kind of wondering when, when do they hit people with those paddles?



Well, they're not exactly a paddle. I think of pedals being kind of wide. They're more like us looked like swords. There. They're about an inch wide. They're about an inch wide and about three feet or so four feet long. And they get a little bit longer as they go out to north and narrow to hold them. And the idea is that you kind of snap it right between the shoulder blade in the spine, you're just focused on the shoulder blade kind of on the muscle or the big tendons that go back here. And it depends where you are. And when you do it, you have it, you have some choice about exactly what. Not exactly, but some choice in the range. So if you lean over really far, then they'll do it just in on the side of the spine. If you don't mean hardly over at all, when they come, then they do it across the top. So if you're really stiff and your top, you know, up on top here of your shoulder, then you don't want to bend over very far. And now it's like, you know, they snap it. So it's not like you know, and so it's by the time that I don't think they do it at some of the Americans and centers anymore. They kind of stopped doing it but for a long time, they if they only would do it if people requested it, and you would go like this limitation, hold someone come over and they'd and either requested it because you were sleepy and it's kind of, kind of, or you requested it because you were kind of tense or, you know, and just kind of loosened things up. And, but so it's not as cruel as it sounds. You know, but it is, you know, pretty, if you don't know anyway, that was anyway, I think you were a teenager a few years ago. So it's also back back in those days there was a I think in Americans then there was, was an America. Yeah, it was there was a little bit more of the warrior macho spirit. Back in those times, then I think there is now and so I think there's much more much more care and compassion and, and,

yeah, I've never been back to it. I've never been back to Zen center after that, but Maybe I should try it again.

You should try it again. It's a lot of fun. I just got hit. hit you. Yeah, I was in Japan or Japan is quite a quite an experience. Oh yeah, yeah it is wake you up. Yeah, there's sometimes sometimes in Japan it's a little bit more macho or something or, and sometimes they you know then sometimes really would hurt and sometimes they would actually break the stick across your shoulders. Yes. Much then. And there rinzhai in the rinzhai monasteries and Soto Zen they, they hit you once on the side of the shoulder. In the rinzhai they would go each side they go

I'll skip that.

But my question was more around like I've heard a practice more of a past and ends and then I heard more.

This concept of sudden enlightenment or I don't know what that means, but on the Vipassana side, it seems it's more progressive purification of the line. And it's more sequential, I guess. So I'm wondering like does even Zen have any concept of gradual purification? It's just a different way of getting to it or they just don't care.

Yeah, then has everything. I mean, one of the one of the one of the places where you see the gradual ideas in 10 Ox herding pictures, is a training progressive training that goes on. And, but the emphasis in Zen is much more. Sometimes the sudden, and but that's a whole thing. And it's a it's a host, that's a whole talk in itself, the sudden and gradual and Zen was a little bit back when the whole sudden gradual thing arose. And it was partly political and partly had to do with, you know, rivalry between different groups in China and, and so, you know, most my Zen teacher when I was practicing with him, he took it a little bit as well, but basically that both are true. It was gradual. And so one idea people say is that for everyone who practices is gradual until it's sudden.

Because, you know, generally, for most people and the experience of something like, realization, like mid awakening is a sudden thing. But, you know, there's, you know, it's usually it usually doesn't happen just suddenly out of the blue. And most of them, you know, you don't know. You know, it's a lot. It's a lot of training in Zen. And so they might not talk about how the training and how grad People change. But Exactly. But in Zen monasteries, the teachers are watching people and they see how people mature and they see how slowly mature and they're guiding people's maturity over time. And then but, but the idea of realisation being sudden is pretty common in Buddhism, all you know from the earliest time but to what you give emphasis to is the thing and so I think we're late now I probably late you guys just go to bed. You know, sleep is really good. getting enough sleep is probably at least as important as getting enough meditation. So thank you all.