

Profound Contemplation - Yoniso Manasikāra

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So today's topic is, in Pāli, *yoniso manasikāra*. Is the volume okay? Feels a little bit funny to me, but maybe it's... And Bhikkhu Bodhi in his big translation translates it as careful attention. I love this. I love anything to do with the word care. So careful, full of care.

Imagine having attention which is full of care. And care has these double meanings that I love. One hand, care means to think something is important, valuable. So imagine that when we offer our attention to something, we think it's important, it's valuable. And certainly, when we bring attention to another person, I think, you know, that do so in a way that this is an important person. And then to care is also to offer support, to take care of something, to offer assistance to.

And so attention which brings assistance, attention which supports in something, And I think it's a lovely aspect of attention, that attention actually makes a huge difference in life. Attention, some people say, is a kind of food. Children grow psychologically. When there are people who see them and care for them and offer them attention as if they count and they're important. If you'd ever thought that attention is, that tending attention is important for other people, our attention is not invaluable. Just hang out with a kid, a little kid, and I can guarantee that your attention is priceless.

From what it does to a child, feel cared for, attended to. And as a parent, sometimes I didn't quite understand this. So the story I've told often of when my son was probably a toddler, and he was playing on the living room floor with a set of blocks. And I was laying there kind of next to him, about three, four feet away, just watching him play with his blocks. And it was kind of lovely. And he was humming, some kind of toddler humming.

And after a while, I got interested in doing some other things and just laying there watching a toddler. So I thought, oh, he's content. He's happy. He hardly knows I'm here. So he doesn't

really need me. So I got up to do something else, and as soon as I got up to leave, he stopped humming. I said, oh, he really knew I was there.

The fact that I was there, my attention, counted for a lot. So careful attention, it's such a beautiful concept. And some of you know that I translate this term differently. In Bhikkhu Bodhi's footnote to this whole passage, he talks about all these things that are the dawn for the arising of the sun. He quotes a commentary that says that for people of different inclinations, the Buddha is teaching these seven or eight different qualities. So some of you are more the view people, some of the self peoples, and there's the sīla people, there's the, you know, so whatever, you know, this works for different people, right?

So different translations work for different people. So even though I love Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation. Careful attention. I like translating as profound contemplation. And partly is to reclaim the tremendous value of thinking. In meditation circles, often thinking is like, you're not supposed to think.

I remember one of the senior Western vipassanā teachers, I asked him a question, I said, what do you think? I started and he didn't let me finish. He just looked at me and said, I don't think. Why not to think? And I said, oh, okay. And certainly there we know that by now I think all of you know that some of your thinking just occasionally is not very valuable.

Some of your thinking occasionally is like even nonsense. Probably. Not all of you, of course. Not all of you, of course, but just the ones that, just some of you. And so it makes sense to let go of thinking. It makes sense to quiet the mind. But the odd thing, or the wonderful thing, is that as the mind gets quieter, it's getting quieter from certain kind of thinking.

Certain kind of thinking gets us in trouble. There is a kind of thinking that helps get us out of trouble. There is a certain kind of, so I call this contemplation because that's my vocabulary that has kind of religious connotations that are kind of rich and nice for me. Some people, you might want to translate it as reflection if you don't care for religion. So profound reflection. There is a way of thinking that has a very different source within us than the source of the kind of thinking that's nonsense, the kind of thinking that is actually harmful for us to have.

You know, they say that the leading cause for depression, or a leading cause for depression, is rumination. That we tell ourselves the same thing over and over again, and it can be quite debilitating if you do it repeatedly. And so there is another source of thinking that is not going to debilitate us, that's actually going to enliven us, going to fill us, warm us up. So here's a thought exercise for you. So the premise is that there are layers of thinking. There's very active thinking that, you know, I don't know what, but you know, just like really spinning out

of control kind of thinking.

And then there's, you know, reasonable thinking, like, I wonder what they're going to serve for supper. You're supposed to be listening to the talk, but, you know, I wonder what they should, you know, they're going to serve for supper. And then there's, you know, thinking like, oh, this resonates a little bit. I wonder where this talk is going to go. It's quieter. It's about what's happening.

And then there's deep, oh, this touches something inside of me. Careful, caring, attention that is valuable for kids. Like, oh, this resonates. Oh, this is interesting. This reminds me of something. Oh yeah, this touches a nice place inside. So there's these layers of play. I like to get quieter, more intimate, less spinning out, less disconnected to what's happening here.

So, part of meditation is, in fact, quieting down, calming the activity level of our thinking, so that we're not thinking so grossly, so, you know, they're putting all our resources into the thinking world. I've kind of thought, imagined sometimes that next time California has an electricity crisis, not enough electricity, all they have to do is plug themselves into my brain. My thinking is going so fast, so much. And so, but to start quieting it down, calming it down, slowing the thinking down, quieter, you know, thinking with a library voice, if you think in voices, you know, just kind of quieter, nicer, or even better than a library voice. Have you ever been to a preschool when the kids are napping? Oh, it's exquisite.

Especially if you're a hairy dad, you know, like the kids are like out of control. And finally, and then you speak softly, it's like sacred, it's sacred. Preschool with all the kids living sacred. When my kids got kicked out of preschool, they flunked preschool, can you believe it? That was a glorious beginning to his education, because he woke up the other kids during nap time, and the teacher just wouldn't tolerate. That was like the one thing she wouldn't tolerate. So it is dangerous to be human.

So this thing, so it gets quieter, quieter. And then we stop thinking certain thoughts. And it gets to a point where we realize that we don't have to think certain thoughts anymore. Certain thoughts arise, and we say, oh, no, thank you. We see them coming. No, thank you. So like, for example, if you've finally gotten quiet here on the sixth day of the retreat or fifth full day of the retreat, It took a lot of work to get this quiet.

And you don't know anything about the California lottery, maybe from out of the state, but you start thinking, I wonder if they have a lottery in California. And I wonder if I can guess the number. And you think, what am I thinking? This is not the time and place for this. I mean, I just got so quiet, and now I'm getting activated about lottery. I'm not interested in lottery.

Can we go back? Can we let go of that and dip back down to the quiet?

And that goes along well. And then you start thinking about that the person sitting next to you has nice socks. Maybe you should buy socks. No, I don't need to think that. No, not now. And you have some control over it because you've gotten so subtle. It's so nice to be quiet. And you're thinking about socks, it's not like you already have a good time. You feel like you lose something in that process. Calm down, sit, quiet.

So it gets to a point, in that transition zone, where any thought, any thought through which you see yourself as being anything less than whole, anything less than perfect, is extra thought, is too much thinking. Like, why have that thought? That's just, you know, that's just another lottery thought, or just another, you know, what socks should I buy thought. It's just another thought that's, I've gotten activated. I know a better place. The better place is to be calm, calm and quiet.

And so in this wonderful spot, we're in this transition zone where we have some choice. Let's just go back into the quiet. And so in that quiet, it turns out there's no thoughts. That undermines you, no thoughts to see you, call you, name you as having a problem, or being anything less than beautiful, or anything less than whole, or anything less than just alive. And I love this idea of wholeness. In that experience, there's nothing which divides the whole.

And as soon as you kind of surface a little bit and the mind starts thinking again a lot, Then you start seeing, oh, you know, actually, you know. I remember the other day I was doing practice discussion for someone. I don't think it was here, but somewhere in the world. And I was in the middle of practice. I looked down and I had two socks, different socks on. That didn't bother me one bit. I didn't think about, oh my. I'm talking about the epitome of mindfulness. And here I have two different socks on, two different socks on. Or someone's looking.

So anyway, so your mind gets quiet. And any kind of thought that is critical to yourself, that views yourself through a negative lens, is seen as just a thought. Is seen, it's just an activation out of a calm place, a place that feels good, a place that feels whole, a place that feels undisturbed, a place where we're not fragmented by the thoughts and the conflicts and the stories and the memories and the predictions of the future that we live under. All the questioning and confusion about things about our life and who we are or something. And that's a phenomenal thing to become quiet and peaceful enough like that and feel like in that state there's no thought that anything is wrong with yourself or even with the world. And then the lawyers of the mind come in to argue why that's not true. Of course there's something wrong with you. Of course there's problems in the world. But why do you have to go involved in those thoughts? Isn't it okay for a little while to be there, to be refreshed, to be nourished,

to be nurtured, to be humming?

Like my little son was humming with his blocks. To be humming in this beautiful state of just being here alive, and to offer yourself this kind of careful attention, to attend to yourself the way that a child needs to be seen, to give yourself five minutes, ten minutes of a long lifetime, an hour, one meditation session, to allow this to be there, This idea that you have no problems, there's nothing wrong with you, there's no war inside, there's no need to be for and against anything but yourself. You're allowed just to be alive. You're allowed to be you in that way. And from there, there can come new thoughts. That there you have a genesis you have an there's a there's a source within us that can have wisdom that can have kindness that can have care compassion that can be honest that can have kind of a greater sensitivity greater creativity than the kind of activated thoughts that are just spinning out and caught up in all these divisions and concepts that we get caught in.

And so that's what *yoniso manasikāra* is. *Yoni* is the kind of thinking that comes from a deeper source. And you don't have to get that quiet to access it. It's there, but you have to learn to be sensitive to it and find it. And it can be a guide for all kinds of things. It can guide us in our practice. It can kind of point us, oh, there's where the path is. This is what the practice is.

So you don't have to have a completely thought-free mind. It's a certain kinds of thinking that we would like to put to rest. Another kind of thinking that actually supports the movement towards greater peace, greater calm, a kind of thinking where the very thoughts themselves bring us to the edge of all thoughts. Where we don't need anything. We're so peaceful. So I want to make an analogy, kind of like the tent analogy I did the other night.

There are places in the world, here in California, forests and here in these mountains here, where there are groves of trees, that you step into these groves of trees and things get quiet. Where there's a peace. And that, you know, I've gone through lots of hikes in these mountains where I come to these groves and I'm hiking along and I enter this grove of trees and like everything, and then I leave the grove and then I'm up again. You know, it's only in there that something happens. Maybe it's a combination of the lighting or the majestic redwood trees all around, the bare ground. Who knows? I don't know what it is, the moisture, the humidity. Who knows? All things that contribute to feel like you've entered a cathedral, a sacred ground.

So there are these places here in these mountains like this. And so there's such a place and people will go there and it becomes kind of a sacred pilgrimage place for some people. And more and more people go there just to spend some time forest bathing there and having a nice time in it. And so it belongs to the state park service, the place. So they go, OK, a lot

of people are coming here. So we have to kind of take care of it a little bit. So they make a little kiosk with a ranger who stands there and receives people and answers questions. And it feels very nice. People come there, they feel received by this nice person who has careful attention for them. And it's very nice.

And more people come and they say, well, more people are enjoying it. So Park Service says, well, we should really have a restaurant here for them to buy some food. So they get some food and more people come. And they're asking a lot of questions about the trees and the animals and the plants. Let's have a nature center. So they put in a nature center. It's really one of the good ones. And they have an amphitheater and movies. And it's like a whole event. And then they upgrade their restaurant. And that's fantastic. We should really make really good, healthy food for everyone. And so transform our society with organic food that's vegan. And no one knows it's vegan, but they're inspired when they realize it because it's so good. And it becomes this big thing. And then that's all very good. But more people are coming. So they decide, well, we should really have a little hotel here. People can stay so they can enjoy it more. And they build a big hotel. And then the local county planning department says, we're building all these things up there. We should move our office up there. And they build an office there, and then they, well, there's all these little kids. We do preschool, because little kids make so much noise in there, so they make a little place where the kids can go and play. And, well, we should really build this up and have an amusement park here, too. And they create an amusement park, and then they have not just a visiting center, but they decide to make it, of course, merchandise. So they build a big store. But a big store means that you need to have a taqueria next to it. And then, you know, there's just building and constructing all these things. And it gets exciting to go there. And then the planning department is so happy to be there. They're all excited to be planning and thinking about what they can do there. And even the local National Guard, I think, moves there because that's where all the people are. And then the Pentagon decides to build their next headquarters there because they're fighting wars, but might as well fight the wars where all the people are. And So there's a war, and there's play, and all this stuff going on. And somehow, tucked in the back of all those buildings is this little kiosk, a little gate that goes in. But no one sees it anymore. It's covered over. They built all these things, and constructions, and exciting. And people are so happy when they get there. And they're running around and doing all this stuff, all this fantastic things they built. Wow, it's so good. This is America. Usually people leave exhausted, and they're like, I need to go someplace where I can rest and get refreshed. I wonder where I can go to get refreshed. The ranger's still there by the little kiosk, but no one finds it anymore. It's like tucked away behind the trash cans of the But just waiting there, just behind where

they built, is this grove of trees to go to. And the few people who stumble upon it, they step into it and everything gets quiet.

The first time this happened to me in my life was when I was 18. And some of you might know that in France there's a cathedral on an island called Mont Saint-Michel. And on low tide, it's kind of like the water disappears from the island, and it's kind of mud, and there's a raised walkway road that goes into the island. High tide, it's an island. And it's on the very flat part of Brittany. So you're driving along, and you see this thing. It looks like a Disneyland castle. Rising out of this hilltop. It's kind of amazing to watch. So I went there and I stayed at a wonderful little Pax Christi Hostel. I don't know how many people, I had a dozen people who stayed there. It was a religious hostel, and there was a wonderful priest who walked around the island with me that evening, and it was kind of a lovely time. And then the next morning, early, I went to the cathedral, which was built on this big hilltop, for a tour of the cathedral, monastery. And as we were going around, we came to the top of the hill, because everything had been built around the hill, sides of it. But on the very top of the hill, the oldest part of it was the very first thing that was built there was a small stone chapel. And that was still there, just like it had been built 1,000, 1,200 years ago. And this huge Disneyland cathedral was, monastery was built around that. And I walked into that room and my mind got silent. My heart settled and wow, I don't know what happened, but wow, this is something. Wow, this is intimate. This is, I feel whole, I feel peaceful and quiet. I was with a group of people giving a tour, so I lingered as long as I could before I had to leave.

So this crazy little analogy, sorry if I agitated you, is supposed to represent how the mind can be. On one hand the Buddha says we have a mind, thoughts, that are constructing thoughts. They construct our life, construct our identity, construct our plans, construct our fantasies, strong ideas of you and me, and judge people, and make plans for the future. It's called constructing in the Buddha's language. And it's understood to be artificial, or to be an artifice, an artifice of human capacity, human construction that doesn't exist in the natural world, but is something that humans can dream up, like forever plastics, forever chemicals. They don't exist, but they do now. They don't exist in nature. Synthetic stuff. And then the Buddha says there's a whole other way of thinking that is not constructive in nature, But it arises from someplace profound within, and it's this *manasikāra*, which I call contemplation. The ancient tradition called it a kind of thinking. But the adjective for it, *yoniso*, the kind of thinking, contemplation it is, is *yonī*, which comes from the word womb. So it's thinking from the womb. Rather than thinking from the control tower up in the head. And what exactly they mean by the womb, you know, here it's meant to be a metaphor for something, and

so I've kind of come to the idea to call it profound. And when Bhikkhu Bodhi calls it careful in that translation, elsewhere he called it wise, *yoniso*, Both those translations don't kind of represent the profundity, the physical profundity, the somatic profundity that *yonī*, womb, implies. And thinking that comes from there, or attention that comes from there, is generative thinking, or if I'm allowed, gestational thinking. And so if all we know is constructive thinking that's up in the head, it's so easy to construct and to make a world which is not ideal. You know, we have to be very creative to construct an image, idea of the world that just makes it all healthy and appropriate and realistic, but to relate, rather than constructing the world, constructing our identity, constructing ourselves up, making something up, we allow this deep wellspring to move through us, a wellspring of goodness, of wholesomeness, of that which nourishes us, And it's the *yonī so manasikāra*, which is a kind of thinking, a kind of attending, a kind of caring for ourselves that comes from this deep place, that the Buddha said is the nourishment for most of the things which are really good in us, the seven factors of awakening, the *Brahmavihāras*, and the *Eightfold Path*, and other things as well. But that's enough, isn't it?

And so the *Eightfold Path* is what it says in this text. So I'll read to you this passage that Kirsten read the first day, but this time it'll be for this, I'm gonna translate it as profound attention, profound contemplation. This is the forerunner and precursor of the rising of the sun, that is, the dawn. So too, for a practitioner, this is the forerunner and precursor for the arising of the Noble *Eightfold Path*, that is, profound contemplation. When a practitioner has profound contemplation, it is expected that they will grow and make abundant the Noble *Eightfold Path*. The word *bhavati* can mean to grow, which is a plant word. Plants grow. Gardeners grow things. And then some people translate this word as cultivate. But I think grow is a richer word. We don't construct it, we don't make it, we grow it. And so the mind, the constructive mind can make synthetic clothes and products and all kinds of things. But the constructive mind cannot grow a baby. That's a whole different process. So in us we have this, we can grow the Noble *Eightfold Path*. And then this idea of making it abundant, *bahulī karoti* is more or less the Pāli, to make it abundant, to increase it. I love this idea of abundance, partly because There's been a long tradition in English, translations of these suttas, to flatten the text, to take away the things that are kind of like abundance. You're not supposed to be abundant, you're supposed to be a renunciant. Having abundance, sense of abundance, that doesn't go along with being a renunciant, so cut it out. But this abundance, to thrive with the *Eightfold Path*, And how does a practitioner who is accomplished in profound contemplation, accomplished in careful attention, grow and make abundant a Noble *Eightfold Path*? Here, a practitioner grows Right View, which is based upon independence, freedom,

in stopping, a radical stopping, and which matures in release, in letting go. So it matures in letting go. Isn't that a nice way of thinking of letting go? That it happens when you mature? Otherwise it can seem like a, then it's not an impoverishment to let go, because something is growing and maturing and then you let go. And then it goes through right view and each of the elements of the right path. But as I said the other day, the word grows right view. Here, then it says, a practitioner develops complete view or whole view. I love the word whole because it's kind of our birthright to be able to feel ourselves as a whole human being. So then it goes through right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. It is in this way that a practitioner who is accomplished in profound contemplation develops and cultivates... I'm translating in my mind because I looked at the Pāli earlier today. Bhikkhu is accomplished in profound contemplation, grows and makes abundant the noble *Eightfold Path*.

So part of the motivation who are cultivating mindfulness, being quiet, sitting still in meditation, calmly doing walking meditation back and forth, is to create the conditions by which we can develop an inner sensitivity to some deeper source of knowing, deeper source of understanding, deeper source of thinking, deeper source of attending than we can from the control tower. And if we're trying to practice from the control tower, we're directing everything, then it's a little bit, sometimes it can be a self-defeating effort even. It doesn't really work from up there. But if we can use enough of our ability to control what's happening, to relax, settle down, maybe with the attitude that we're not the person who's supposed to practice. We have to be the one who provides the conditions so that we are practiced, that we're allowing something else to move through us. Or at least there's a reciprocal relationship between what we are offering in this practice. We offer ourselves, we offer our care, we offer our kindness, our compassion, we offer our attention. This priceless attention, we offer something. We are not in charge of making anything happen. A gardener is not in charge of growing the tomatoes. The gardener is in charge of watering tomatoes. Fertilizing tomatoes, keeping the weeds gone, so that the tomatoes have the best chance to grow. We're kind of like gardeners of ourselves when we do this practice. So we offer these wonderful qualities, wonderful things, so that we can be practiced, so that our tomatoes can grow, whatever it is that we have in here. And so there has to be a kind of a dual effort when we do this practice. On one hand, we have to contribute something. And the idea is to contribute that with some continuity so it really sticks and stays and can begin having a nice influence. And one of the reasons we go on retreat is because here we have long periods of time where we don't have to be distracted, we don't have to take care of a lot of responsibilities and jump around, and there's not a lot of websites you have to go on here while you're here, none actually, so it's

so nice. And so it gives you a time to do this inner work of offering, giving this good attention, continuously as you can. Over and over again. And even though it's not continuous non-stop, I suspect you offer more ongoing attention here in one day than you do probably in a month at home in your ordinary life. And that makes a huge difference. Just be content with how well you can do it. And then just try to bring this kick, the continuity of it, so the influence of that attention lets something inside begin to hum, But I can't shake my little son to say, start humming again. He's not going to hum then. If I wanted him to hum again, probably I'd just lay down with him on the floor and just let him continue playing. And then we bring honesty to our experience. We bring kindness to what's happening. We make offerings. So everything we do is like an offering. Not a construction, not taking control. So that's one thing we do. The other whole half of practice is to make room to allow something to happen, to make space for something, for a deeper sensitivity to arise. We're also making room so we are practiced So that just as much as we say we're practicing, the practice is doing us. But that can only happen if we stop taking complete control and complete responsibility for it. If we feel like it's all up to me, then you probably have one more reason to be discouraged about yourself. But it's phenomenal that you don't have to be the one in charge. You just have to be the good gardener. The problem I had when I was at the monastery at Tassara, I was assigned to be the gardener, and I would start each workday being, I felt like the word I used for myself, very parental for my plants. I would just go around and just kind of check in on every plant. And it took way too long, like I was supposed to be working. But it's like, oh, my plant, looks like you've grown, it's so nice to see you. And I just went to, I was just in this love affair with the plants. So that's one of the problems that might arise for you if you have too much of this kind of inner quiet and sensitivity that you might fall in love with things too easily. So there are worse things for you that can happen. So we allow something to happen. And as I think I mentioned this, that the metaphor the Buddha gives for concentration is not this laser focus, you know, like you have this laser up in your forehead and you zoom down onto your breath and you zap it and you're going to, you know, and you're unwavering. The metaphor is this beautiful, big mountain lake that's peaceful, at least in my image of it. Peaceful, there's no wind. And the analogy is there's no rain that's feeding into, that's filling up the lake. There are no rivers coming into it. The only place where it gets fed, replenished, is an underwater spring that springs this fresh, mountain clear, pure water. And you can imagine what it looks like if you put dye in it. It would look like a fountain, an underwater fountain. The water's coming up from the bottom and moving out. And that's the metaphor that Buddha uses for developing concentration. It's a metaphor that again, there has to be some allowing, something profound to well up, to make room for something to be here. And what that is, part of

what that means is a deeper sensitivity, a deeper sensitivity to our body, deeper sensitivity to what's happening. And I love right today, I love this word sensitivity. Because it kind of, when we use the word mindfulness too much, it sounds like something you're supposed to do. Where if you say, concentrate on your breath, okay, I gotta get serious here. But if you say, let yourself be more sensitive to your experience, I think it's a very different approach to allow for sensitivity. And also the word sensitivity is related to the word sensations and to sensing. And to sense, sensing and sensations are non-dual. When you feel a sensation, at the very same time you're sensing. Sensing and sensations arise together. Where do they arise? They begin in the place in your body where those sensations occur, where that sensing happens. And so sensing is a kind of attention, is a kind of form of awareness that's arising from the nerves at the end, you know, these nerves that we have in different parts of the body, is rising out of our body. So if I feel my breathing, the movement of my belly as I breathe, the sensations of moving are being sensed in the same location where the sensations are. The sensing begins in my belly. The source of that kind of attention is in the belly. If I'm in the control tower thinking about my breathing or my belly, from the control tower looking down at it, I might still sense it, but I'm kind of imagining I'm looking at it from above. Which makes some distance, which is very close to where the architects are for the planning department. And so rather than saying, focus on your breathing, rather than saying, let your breathing be your anchor, it's a beautiful metaphor, this idea of everyone needs an anchor for meditation. Anchor means that your boat, if it doesn't have an anchor, it's not anchored to the bottom of the lake or the ocean, and the slightest current or wind or whatever will just, the boat will drift away and disappear. So you have this long rope that goes to the anchor and your boat doesn't go very far, it stays more or less in the same place. But that metaphor is a little bit like being in the control tower with a rope going down if you anchor as you're breathing. What if instead we use the language of source? Let your awareness arise from a deep source within. If you're focusing on the movements of the body as you breathe in the torso, that's the source. Stay close to the source. And let the source reveal itself to you. Oh, this is how it is. Breathing in and breathing out. Expansion, contraction, pressure, release of pressure, movement. Those are all being revealed, now the body is the source for attention, rather than identifying attention as a function of the mind. And that's a way of cultivating greater sensitivity, sensing feelings. It's a way of sensing somatically so that we're not so caught up in the constructing mind, the constructing thoughts. And with time, when we relax deeply and settle and allow this and allow and have this careful attention to what's here, careful attention to the sensations, letting the constructing thinking become quieter, then you might find that there are creative thinking, creative thoughts about the practice itself. There are little thoughts that

you can tell yourself that guide you in the practice. Oh, that's nice. Maybe if I feel that even more intimately, can I kind of ride that sensation more closely? Can I allow my thoughts, my constructive thinking, can I allow them to fade away with the exhale? What happens there between the end of the exhale and the beginning of the inhale? Look at that, there's a little pause. It's kind of peaceful, that pause. Look at that. I kind of like it, and I don't want to breathe in. Look at that, I'm a little bit of attached. Or look what happens at the end of the exhale. Just a little feeling of anxiety at the end of the exhale. Oh, that's familiar. That's what happens when I feel like I'm losing control. I don't like not being in control. And letting go at the end of the out-breath is a little bit like I have to give up control a little bit. Inhale is okay, but letting go, releasing with the exhale. So these little thoughts of recognition, thoughts of questioning, looking, they all keep you on track. Maybe you ask yourself questions, I wonder if I can be more kind here. I wonder if there's a way of being more receptive. I wonder what it would be like to feel the changing nature of all the sensations, just the rippling through of it. So there's a different kind of thinking that You're connected, it's sensitive, it's intimate, it feels nice, maybe you feel kind of a semblance of home, you feel like, I'm home here, I feel comfortable, it's cozy. And there's little thoughts that are moving you along, guiding you. And this deep inner sensitivity at some point, you'll feel, I like the word feel, you'll sense, you'll recognize, What in the tradition is called *ehipassiko*, which is come and see. You'll feel a calling. You'll feel something that says, oh, this is the place to be. Come and see here. If you develop this deeper sensitivity, oh, yeah, come and feel here. Like what I found out with my breathing, When I get settled, I usually do follow my movements in my stomach when I breathe. But then as I get quieter, more settled, I start feeling, oh no, it needs to go up. The attention needs to go up. And sometimes it travels up until it's in the middle of the chest. And then sometimes it'll go back down again. But I'm not choosing this. It's just like, oh, that's where the onward leading is. That's where the come and see, the invitation, come here, come here, this is where our attention can be. And this *yoniso manasikāra*, this careful attention, this profound contemplation, can also begin functioning when we're deeply troubled with something, when we feel depressed or sad or grieving or angry or confused or we are spinning out a little bit, it can still be there as a companion. And then you can ask yourself, you know, how does this deeper source, how does it want to relate? How does this look upon my sadness? How does this look upon my anger? What kind of attention do you want to give your toddler? What kind of attention do you want to give your confusion, your conflicts, your spinning out and reoccupations? And it's a very different world to live in when you're not trying to solve your life with the very kind of thinking that has caused the problems themselves. But if you can view things that are difficult for you from this profound source, this profound

sensitivity, if you know that this exists for you, you discovered it at various times, and then remember, oh yeah, there, I'm having a hard time, this is really hard today, But what does my friend, *yoniso manasikāra*, what does my friend, careful attention, what does my friend, this profound contemplation, what does it have to offer? What wisdom does it have? What perspective does it have? When it looks upon things in this peaceful way or profound way or caring way, And from this *yoniso*, this deep place within, practice becomes so much richer, so nice. It feels more inviting. It's not a duty. It's not a project. Even though this wonderful little sutta that we're reading uses the word accomplishment, it's a dangerous word. It's maybe not about accomplishment. Maybe it's all a movement towards realizing our wholeness, that we're whole. Didn't that whole feel free? Feel a kind of freedom to breathe, to be who we are, and to feel that just to be alive is enough. Not because we settled for something that's not so good. But the very best parts of ourselves are close by, here, the profound source within. So if what I've said makes some sense to you, then perhaps for this evening, maybe you stay close to something that's here. If it doesn't make sense, File this talk away. One day it will. And just be content to wait. Keep practicing until you are practiced. Thank you.