Good evening, bodhisattvas.

For a brief time in my misspent youth, I stayed at Aichi Senmon Nisōdō, the head training convent for Soto Zen nuns in Nagoya, Japan. It was an extraordinary place with an extraordinary group of women living and practicing there together in a beautiful, traditional Japanese-style temple in the hills of Nagoya. The teacher there is a remarkable woman whom I’ve mentioned before occasionally, Aoyama Shundō, Blue Mountain Roshi. Some of you might remember a story I told about her: In Japan it’s traditional that when a girl is born her mother begins sewing her wedding kimono. When it became clear that this was not in the cards for Aoyama Shundō, her wedding kimono was turned into the covers for the instruments in the zendo — the bells and the drums; it was quite touching to see that.

This is the place she lives and teaches. One weekend during the time I was there, there was a gathering of laywomen. Hundreds of Zen laywomen came from all over Japan and converged on the temple, which was hosting this gathering of practice for them. Aoyama Roshi felt very strongly that it was important for her to support this practice for women, because they were supporting so many other people in their lives. I was very happy and excited to see that Paula Arai, a scholar and academic, a Japanese-American whose field has been Japanese women’s practice, has just published a book about those very laywomen associated with Aichi Senmon Nisōdō, and some of the nuns who are their teachers. I can visualize them; I can just see them so clearly.

The book is Bringing Zen Home: The Healing Heart of Japanese Women’s Rituals. As I was reading it, I realized I wanted to bring it into this loose extended conversation we’re having about reconciling dualities, because there’s so much in their practice that is about exactly that. They see practice as healing. That’s what it’s for. They have a sophisticated and subtle understanding of both the diagnosis of what the problem is and a sense of what healing means.
I was struck by how much what they’ve developed – and this is something they’ve developed themselves in their own lives and in collaboration with each other, with some guidance from the nuns of this convent – is congruent with the ways we’re thinking about the Way and practice.

So, if you will, sit back and let the stories of these women wash over you. Then I would be interested to hear what you think are the congruencies and differences between their lives and ours — our cousins across the Pacific Ocean. One of the complementary dualities that struck me as I was reading the book is the koan sense that there are a couple of fundamental attitudes we can take in life and practice: those of the host and the guest. There are a lot of levels to host and guest.

For example, we talked a few weeks ago about how pilgrims who have traditionally gone on pilgrimages from temple to temple and studied at various places are archetypally taking the role of the guest. They are the wanderer, the transient, the person who comes and stays awhile and takes what there is to take as teachings and wanders off. In East Asia they’re called clouds and water, because there’s that quality of movement all the time. In contrast to them, the teachers whom they are visiting are taking the role of host. They are welcoming whoever comes into their place, and they often have mountain in their names. So you have this relationship between clouds, water, and mountains.

In that place where it comes to be realized that host and guest are the same thing, when that conversation deepens and you drop down out of the apparent duality and see the identity of host and guest, those are the moments when awakening blooms.

These women are very much acting as hosts in their life; that’s their position. Some of that is by choice, and some is probably due to the ferocious norms of Japanese culture, which are still quite strong. I have a friend in Japan who is an elder sister and has a younger sister. It was amazing to see how these two sisters’ lives were entirely shaped by the accident of birth order. My friend, being the older daughter, lived her whole life knowing that she was going to end up taking care of the parents — her parents and perhaps her husband’s parents. She lived her whole life in preparation for that: got a good education, got a good job, provided a house, had kids, did the whole thing so that that could happen. And her younger sister, who was absolutely and unequivocally free of those obligations, went off to India and became an artist, took a Hindi name, and had a
completely bohemian other life. Just because one was the older sister and one was the younger sister. Those norms are very strong in Japanese culture, and as I was reading the book, I could feel their operation in these women’s lives.

They were of the generation (my generation, many of your generation) where they’re tending to children and grandchildren and parents, and, if they are married, in-laws. Most are married, some are single. The married women all had children; none of the single women did. Most of them worked outside the house. They took care of their families, and they also took care of their family altars. In the heart of every Zen home in Japan is an ancestors’ altar, which often would be the husband’s family’s altar. Now the custom is that the women set up their own altars for their families as well, so you’ve got two things going on. They take care of these altars, they take care of the ancestors, and they do all the stuff that is necessary to tend to the ancestors as well; so they are taking care of the seen and unseen in their families.

They support each other in their practices. Generally they are hosting and hosting and hosting, and it occurred to me that one of the beautiful things that practice offers them — in a lot of different ways, on a lot of different levels — is the chance to be a guest. It made me realize how crucial being able to be a guest sometimes is. I want to give a sense of what these oases of being a guest in these vast landscapes of hosting were like for these women.

It seemed particularly important because this was a generation who lived through World War II or were born shortly thereafter, and all of them had seen serious trauma. There were murders, suicides, abandoned children, starvation, and serious illness in their lives and the lives of their families. Paula Arai mentions that as she is speaking with them, she realizes that almost no one has ever asked them to tell those stories. They’ve almost never spoken about those things. In a culture that stigmatizes mental illness, where there is no tradition of psychotherapy, and there is no one to talk to in that way, having these places in their practice where they could be guests became tremendously important. Perhaps it’s not surprising, as I mentioned, that for them the focus of practice is healing. I will talk in a little bit about what healing means to them.

I mentioned that they take care of their altars in their family homes, and in their worldview, everything and everyone is a buddha. Everything has buddha nature, everything is buddha nature, and your dead ancestors become your personal buddhas,
which is what they call them. There’s a very strong connection to them, and there is very much a feeling of being accepted by them, so that when they chant in front of the altar, take care of the altar, make the offerings, and do the ceremonies, there is also a sense that they can relax and lean into their ancestors, and that their ancestors will just accept them however they are, and whatever is going on in their lives.

One of the women, a nun at the convent, says that it’s not in any way like worship of ancestors, or abdicating responsibility to them. Kyoko Sensei says, “I don’t feel that they’ll just take care of my problems; I feel that they will look with warm affection.” That’s really all they’re asking for: someone to look with warm affection while they figure out their problems. “I do pray they help things go in a good direction.”

There’s another woman, Hondo-san, who follows a particular Japanese tradition: When you live with other people, every time you come home you announce as you are taking your shoes off, “I am home.” But it’s home not just in the sense of the place that I happen to be living right now, but home in the sense of where I am home in the world, the place of my heart. Anyone who’s in the house shouts back, “Your homecoming is welcome.” That is quite common in Japan. Even though Hondo Sensei lived alone, every time she came home she would say, “I am home.” Paula Arai writes about realizing that she’s talking to her ancestors, she’s talking to her personal buddhas, and in her own heart-mind she heard that reply, “Your homecoming is welcome,” every single time. So that was a place they got to be a guest.

Another was with the nuns at the convent who some of the women took as their teachers. There was one description of a woman’s feeling about the nuns that I thought was so beautiful and worth a look at. She would go once a month to do calligraphy with a nun whose name is Kitō Sensei. This is how this woman described her experience of Kitō Sensei:

As each person approaches individually, Kitō Sensei sees and listens to what she has brought with her in her heart-mind. Few people discuss matters explicitly or with any depth; silence is everywhere and everyone respects it. It is rather an approval implicit in the air. By being completely present with you, she affirms and embraces your whole being with no judgment and no hesitation. You feel seen, understood, and accepted.
As Hondo-san puts it, “I go to scripture copying because for that one time, for that one hour once a month, I feel understood. It is due to Kitō Sensei’s presence.” There’s that sense of being able to relax, be seen, and to be a guest when they are with the nuns.

Another place they have it is in relationship to Kannon / Kanzeon, which is the Japanese way of pronouncing the name Guanyin in Chinese, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. They have a very strong connection to her, even though Guanyin shape-shifts: she moves around the world and changes gender; in some places she is masculine, some feminine, and some androgynous. In Japan most of the images are androgynous, and Kannon is usually referred to as ‘he,’ but for them she is a ‘she.’ There is no question about that, and their relationship to her is as feminine. Just so you know, there’s a chant that they use a lot in moments of crisis which is Nenpi Kannon Riki, which means ‘I call on the power of Guanyin.’ I invoke the power of Guanyin; I believe in the power of Guanyin. And they talk about how they use that all the time. In moments of crisis they just begin chanting Nenpi Kannon Riki.

One woman describes a moment of understanding she had about Kannon:

When I was riding my bike on a cold day in February with snow falling, I saw the bud of a plum blossom. I thought of all the energy the bud was exerting to bloom even in winter. It is not just the energy of the bud; it is the energy of the universe working to bloom this flower. The world is working so hard to activate this flower, and it is working for me too. At that instant I felt embraced by this energy. The Kannon Sutra says that there is this power that holds you. This is it, Kannon riki, compassion power. There is a huge power in the universe that aims to make flowers blossom.

The last place where women can be guests in this practice of what Paula Arai calls domestic Zen, and which one of the women defines as “healing in the midst of a mess” (Can you relate? Domestic Zen: healing in the midst of a mess) is in silence, in a connection to the vastness. And that shows that all these small ways of relaxing, of feeling accepted, are actually this very deep movement of falling into the vastness and understanding that one is held in that, one is part of that.

Yamamoto-san talks about the ritual of making tea for each other and the silence that’s a part of that: “Silence is treasured because it embraces you and supports you in the deepest and weakest places.” Such a different feeling about silence; silence is a presence rather than an absence, not the absence of noise or conversation but the presence of a
thing that supports you in the deepest and weakest places. It is safe to be just as you are in
the silence; you are accepted as you are, you are protected and cared for, your deepest
needs are understood and met.

So here are these women doing domestic Zen, healing in the midst of a mess, and one
of the things they don’t do, hardly at all, is meditate. Meditation is not part of their
practice. Instead they are doing the other things that I’ve been talking about: doing things
at the family altar, a lot of chanting, copying sutras, copying images of Kannon and other
figures. They do what they call polishing the heart-mind, as they are going about their
cleaning tasks; they think that everything they are doing to clean is a way of cleaning the
heart-mind. They are doctoring their families. They write out sacred symbols on paper in
an esoteric tradition and they actually eat the paper that the symbol is written on. They
drink water that is drawn from a sacred source at different times of the year, and they mix
that in with tea. If someone if coming down with a cold or feeling blue, they will throw a
little Mizu Tori into the tea. Paula Arai says:

The types of practices found in domestic Zen are done amidst the sounds of water
running for the laundry, dishes, and baths. They are done with the aroma of food
cooking and incense burning. Adding Mizu Tori [that sacred water] to the rice that
the family will eat for dinner is seen as much of a key ingredient in nurturing the
family as soy sauce and seasoning. It is because these practices are woven into the
demands of daily family life that they are practical and effective.

She talks about one woman who is in the middle of an elaborate chanting service in
front of the family altar, and in the middle of it, turns her head and says, “Frank, don’t
forget to take out the garbage,” and goes back to the chant. That’s the way it’s done.

They do traditional Japanese arts like tea and flower arranging. There’s a sense now in
many Japanese homes that it’s the women who go to the temples and then bring back the
blessings for the family and spread them around in the family.

So here is this nitty-gritty, domestic, daily practice, quite different from ours in that
there is no meditation, but rather all these other ceremonies and rituals. Here is how they
see things, how they understand why they are doing all this, and why it matters.

I mentioned that they see the purpose of their practice as healing. They talk about,
Okay, so what is the problem that we’re healing? They see suffering as the delusion that we are
separate, alone, and unsupported. Healing comes when we find a sense of peace that doesn’t shatter in the face of either difficult events — things that happen in the outer world — or delusional thoughts and activities. That peace comes from a deep, heartfelt body-sense that we are all integral to this vast interrelated network of everything that is in the universe. Integral to it, not just a part of it. Without each person, thing, and being in the world, that network would be different; that vast Indra’s net wouldn’t be the same.

Healing is to know deeply in your heart, mind, body, and spirit that you are integral to Indra’s net. And that compassionate support is running all the time through that network. You are receiving and also giving it, so there is a constant circulation and exchange of compassionate support. One of the women says, “To be embraced is to be healed.”

Another aspect of healing is a retraining of yourself to act in harmony with the way things are. The way things are is both interrelated, as we have been talking about, and impermanent. So healing is a way of holding your heart-mind, as they call it. It’s an art, they think, to seek out ways to heal and not to suffer. One of the practices they talk about is choosing to be grateful in the face of fear-driven and torment-ridden possibilities.

See if this sounds familiar to any of you who have been hanging out here for awhile: they think of what they are doing not as a delineated course of behavior; there isn’t a recipe or a book, things aren’t laid out in outline form. It’s more a certain orientation to living. They see their practices as consisting of guidelines rather than absolutes. Only in hindsight and only when Paula Arai would ask them questions, could they see a consistent set of values, attitudes, and activities that as a whole constituted a way. It’s not only we who are improvising moment by moment in what we’re doing. I find that quite lovely to think that there are people all over the world making it up as we go along.

The contrast they set up is not between suffering and not suffering, which I think we do a lot in the West. Those are the choices: you either suffer or you don’t suffer. For them the contrast is between suffering and healing. That felt important: healing is a process, a way of life, something that goes on and on. Healing isn’t a one-time event that marks before and after. As a matter of fact, when Paula Arai started asking them about healing, she first asked them in a verb tense that in Japanese would translate as, “Have you ever experienced a healing?” And they all looked at her like, Eh? And when she changed tenses to what she calls ‘the gratitude tense,’ so that the question became something like, “Have
you ever been the grateful recipient of a healing?” They all said, “Oh yeah.” They thought of healing not as an event that happens individually: I experienced a healing. They received this healing, and it came from a whole vast interrelated network. The source of it was not themselves, but the universe itself.

When they pray, they see prayer as a request that they are sending out into this net of interconnectedness and interrelationship. It’s not addressed to a specific figure; you don’t pray to one of the bodhisattvas or something like that, you just release it into this network. And you know you are going to be heard because of that interconnection. It’s impossible that you would not be heard, because it is all connected. This is what leads to the sense of the healing quality of prayer. At the same time that you are praying and sending your requests out into the network, you are happily obligated to listen carefully for the prayers of others. The women talk about, in each interaction, trying to hear the prayer underneath whatever is happening. In each interaction, what is this person’s unspoken prayer? Can I hear it? What is your prayer?, they are asking over and over again. They have a strong sense that when they’re doing that, they’re embodying Guanyin or Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion, who is the one who hears the sounds of the world.

Healing is a process, an art, something you spend your whole life doing. This means, for example, that to heal from grief doesn’t mean that grief will stop. It’s not the cure of grief. It’s that you have come to be able to prepare yourself for what they call the seasons of grief. It will be like this now, and then it will become like this, and then like this. And so you live. You understand that if grief is a process, then the healing of grief is a process. Life is a process of coming to try to see and understand the seasons of grief, or any other strong feeling, and come into harmony with that.

In the perspective of interrelatedness they have, and in the perspective of everything being a buddha, even something like sickness is a buddha. Not metaphorically; sickness is really a buddha. They say we have to live with what is happening now; we can’t live later. And we cannot force life to be a certain way. So if the present buddha is sick buddha, that’s the buddha we live with.

They talk about developing a relationship with illness, using a verb that refers to people who are quite close, as in a friendship where you drop away from formalties and have an easy, casual comfort with each other. The verb that describes that kind of
friendship is the verb they use to describe their relationship with illness. When we talk about intimacy, we talk about finding intimacy with whatever is happening, and that seemed to be a similar kind of thing. Then it makes sense to try to be kind to the illness, which might mean resting when your body is tired, or not eating food that aggravates it, not doing those things that make it worse. That’s their sense of being kind to the illness.

All of this arises out of a sense that Kannon’s heart, the heart of the embodiment of compassion, is the heart that accepts everything. If we want to develop Kannon’s heart for ourselves, a heart that can accept everything, we have first to be aware of not exhausting our heart. So we need to allow our hearts to relax and let things in. Letting things in, accepting everything, for them, is a matter of growing the heart bigger so everything can fit. So how big is your heart? Big enough for everything to fit. That’s the answer.

One of the nuns, Yoko Sensei says, “With Kanzeon you see the world not through your eyes but through your heart-mind. Everything appears differently. Look deep from the heart-mind. All things in the universe communicate through the heart-mind.” When we’re seeing and hearing with our heart-minds, we then see and hear all the heart-minds of everything else. Then we go back to that question which seems perfect in that moment: “What is your prayer?”

When they talk about this permitting and allowing, they use a word that we usually translate as ‘to forgive.’ They’re saying that this is a practice of making your heart-mind big enough to include everything, even the things you think are wrong and don’t like. And those things you forgive. Even if you don’t agree with it, even if you don’t like it, you don’t turn it away. That made me think of our koan: “When my mind doesn’t arise all things are blameless.”

If you don’t do that, the alternative is that negativity builds up walls and appears to separate that which is naturally interrelated. That’s the problem with negativity, judgment, blaming, not accepting, picking and choosing — it puts a wall between you and everything else, blocking and damming that which is naturally interrelated. And that creates an inherent strain, not just on yourself but on the network as a whole.

To maintain that rejection of something, that wall, takes a tremendous amount of energy and drains energy away from other things. That’s something we’ve talked about: What could you do with all that energy you would liberate if you stopped judging things?
We wouldn’t even have to worry about solar power anymore; we could run the world on our released judgment.

If you leave negativity for too long, they have two images for what happens: it either festers or calcifies. It rots and stinks, or it hardens into bitterness.

Kitō Sensei says, “It’s really about how much you are in touch with the power of boundlessness. If you are sincere and unobstructed [I think being unobstructed is a great goal], not calculating gain and loss, and letting things flow like a stream, then forgiveness and allowing room for things occurs. Depending on the matter at hand, you can forgive or make room for something by responding in silence. [So in other words you don’t have to like something you don’t like, you can respond with silence.] But it is important not to turn anger in on yourself, as you forgive and make room for your heart-minds.”

So here are these women, in some ways living very different lives than we live, absolutely committed to developing the heart-mind of Kanzeon in themselves. Absolutely committed to healing whatever creates tears in the fabric of that interrelationship, either inside themselves or in relationships with other beings. Committed to extending the conditions for others to allow them to heal — family, the women they practice with in their communities, people they work with. Very simple. I think about Vimalakirti’s house with its astonishing collection of miracles. If you walked by it, from the outside you would never know what was going on inside. Women stained and dyed by life, women completely in life and completely committed to healing themselves, those around them, and their world to the extent that they can. I find myself quite moved by them and wanting to learn what it’s possible to learn from them.

I’ll close by telling you of a ceremony they do which I had never heard of. I don’t think it’s been spoken about in the West, and I don’t think very much in Japan, either. But it’s such an interesting thing I thought you might enjoy it. There’s a group of women who get together once a month. They have a giant mala of 108 baseball-sized beads with one softball-sized counting bead, in a circle in the middle. They begin by doing some chanting, and then sometimes one of the women will suddenly go over, her head will bend to the ground, and she will begin to speak. She is actually channeling teachings from Kanzeon, one of the bodhisattvas, or Shakyamuni. Paula Arai describes being present at one of
these, and a very humble, quiet, reticent woman is the one that goes over and then does twenty minutes of these astonishing teachings. When it’s over she blinks, blushes, and goes back to being quiet and unassuming. And then everyone says, “Thanks, that was great.”

Then they pass the giant mala around from hand to hand while they’re chanting. It goes on for an hour. It starts out fairly slow, but as the hour goes by, they pick up speed so that this thing is now whipping around the room, and everybody is chanting at a ferocious speed. It requires incredible concentration, because if you miss or lapse, you’re going to mess the whole thing up. Everyone is watching everyone else, so if someone has to wipe their brow or change their position, everybody else compensates for it. They keep this fast thing going on for an hour and then they stop, and that’s it. They bow to each other and go home. I love that. If anyone feels like constructing a giant mala we might play with that and see what happens.

I’ll stop there. I welcome any comments or questions. How does all of this strike you?

Q1: It is very moving and touching to hear. Any idea what those beads are made of?
JIS: There’s actually a photograph in the book, wood I think but it must be fairly light wood I imagine.

Q2: When they talk about the ancestors, are they their relatives or teaching ancestors?
JIS: They are the biological or adopted relatives.

Q3: What did you say about illness? Something about seeing it as a buddha?
JIS: Illness is a buddha, and they develop a friendly relationship with it. It is important to treat it with friendliness, which means taking care of yourself if the illness buddha is in residence.

Q2: It has that quality of being extremely subversive in the sense that it is extremely ordinary. I can imagine from the outside you would not see a lot of this happening; it would just look like a routine ritual but it seems like it is a very, very deep practice. It’s very ordinary at the core. Isn’t that ordinary?
JIS: And that is exactly what I love about it, healing in the middle of a mess and very
deep and …

Q2: And not separating yourself from the mess, you are still cleaning up the dishes.

Q3: A meditation of everyday life. Seeing it as a meditation and practicing.

JIS: Yes, and you can feel it as they speak about how they understand things. They
are coming to the same conclusions that people who meditate in a more formal sense come
to. You know it’s the same. Yeah, the universe looks the same.

Q4: And they meet once a month?

JIS: Yeah, to do the passing around of the mala.

Q4: Or see each other at the temple. Is that the only formal meeting, or are they
seeing each other in other ways?

JIS: They are seeing each other in other ways. They go to the convent to do public
ceremonies and to do things like the scripture copying, so they are bumping into each
other in different ways all the time.

Q5: But it seems like they are each operating independently and uniquely and actually
living that integral, interconnected way, coming to these incredibly sublime voices. But it’s
not as if they are receiving a teaching and taking it in, or studying it or memorizing it or
anything like that.

JIS: They do read and they do study. They study the tradition to some extent and
they go to hear Aoyama Roshi’s dharma talks. So they do have that formal element in their
practice, but the voices are so individual you can tell they are completely digested by each
individual woman.

Q6: What it reminds me of is the koan about the father and the daughter. When the
father falls down and then the daughter falls down and he says, “What are you doing?”
And she says, “Fortunately, I am here to help you.”

Q7: What’s really fascinating is that it’s a group of women doing this, that it’s evolved
as a group of women practicing. Men don’t seem to be participating in this by the nature
of the way society works. Somehow the structure of their culture … and in our culture too, in fact. You could look at it that way too. American suburban housewives are doing this.

Q8 : What are the men doing?
JIS : Nothing, in terms of spiritual practice; it’s mostly not happening. I think what it also tells us, is we have this stereotype of what Zen is, which is based on this monastic model, right? And if they’re doing anything, they are doing that. And here is this whole other thing going on, parallel.

Q8 : Which in fact we strive to have in our lives.
JIS : Which is in fact so much closer to what we are trying to do.
Q8 : And which we’re saying is so difficult to do.
Q9 : And isn’t this the primary mode that was actually open to women? The monastic life was not really open to them, was it?
JIS : It was, although to a lesser degree, and you would have to make the commitment to become a nun. What’s so revolutionary about this is that they’re laywomen.
Q9 : Right.

Q10 : Is this all over Japan?
JIS : I would imagine it is all over Japan, but Aichi Senmon Nisōdō, this convent, is very powerful. Having been there I’ve felt it — it’s a very powerful place, and Aoyama Roshi is a very powerful teacher. I can just imagine that it’s a buzzing locus of activity.

Q11 : I have heard it is very common in South Korea anyway. There is this doctor, Dr. Tin Ti. She’s a teacher in California who’s written a little book about that. Basically she says this is the most common form of meditation over there; the kinds of meditations and practices from the East that have come to this country are mostly the monastic formal ones. But in reality the main practice is other than that, it is the meditation of daily life and women are the priestesses of it.
JIS : I think that is true. It’s a funny distortion of the way we received the traditions from Asia.
Q12: So if they preceded us they provide a kind of model for us, and it’s going to shape the field that we’re a part of and the way we think about network — that web of compassion. It’s another way of thinking about the field, it’s actually how it works, actually how it happens.

JIS: Yeah, yeah.

Q5: It’s the basis of a lot of indigenous spirituality, too. Just this sense that the sacred is not separate from life, that you don’t just close your eyes and be still, you can be in life and be practicing, and in fact that’s where it lives.

JIS: Yeah.

Q14: So does this have to exclude men? I’m really curious about how men feel about this.

JIS: I wouldn’t see why it would.

Q6: In indigenous cultures they are included, everybody’s involved.

Q7: It still seems specific to the way cultures work — an interaction with daily life.

Q16: This particular arising that’s so similar to what we are doing, are you seeing that as a particular blossoming? Are you guessing that it’s all over Japan and other places as well?

JIS: I am guessing it is happening all over, yeah. I think it’s more a matter of how much reporting of it there is, how visible it is, but it’s probably happening all over. I hope so!

Q8: It is so cool.

JIS: Yeah!

Q17: When you said, healing in the midst of a mess, I just heard an author saying there’s an awakening going on all over the planet in the midst of a garbage dump. It reminded me of that.

JIS: Anything else?
Q9: In this area we really do live in a field of indigenous ritual, but it doesn’t come into our lives. In thinking about going to the Christmas dances, which I try and do every year at the Pueblos, that’s where I can touch that net. Whatever the politics are, or any of that, it is still *there* in the Pueblos. We have it, but we don’t usually connect to it. This seems like another version of what we are talking about.

JIS: Thank you all very much.